

MY LIFE

SIXTY YEARS' RECOLLECTIONS
OF BOHEMIAN LONDON

GEORGE R. SIMS

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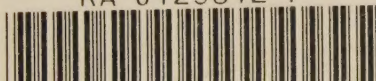
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MY LIFE



Geo. R. Sullivan

MY LIFE

SIXTY YEARS' RECOLLECTIONS
OF BOHEMIAN LONDON

BY

GEORGE R. SIMS

Albert Ward.

LONDON

EVELEIGH NASH COMPANY

LIMITED

1917

KING ALFRED'S COLLEGE
WINCHESTER •

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TO THE MEMORY OF
JOHN THOMSON

BUT FOR WHOSE GOODWILL AND GOOD
GUIDANCE IN THE STREET OF ADVEN-
TURE I MIGHT NOW BE A PROSPEROUS
CITY MAN INSTEAD OF A STRUGGLING
AUTHOR

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PROLOGUE

I BEGAN these reminiscences, written at the suggestion of my friend the editor of the *Evening News*, in the first hour of the year 1916.

The front door was flung wide at five minutes to midnight on December 31, 1915, and as the last of the twelve momentous shocks of sound died away a dark man in the shape of a friendly policeman did me the kindly service of being the first to cross my threshold.

And now that the New Year has come to us amid an almost oppressive stillness, with no gay clang of church bells, and only a far distant and apparently restrained welcome by the steam-whistles and the hooters of the great works where labour toils through the night, I sit down in my grandfather's big cane-seated arm-chair and peer into the dim and distant past.

In the hour that my land is athrill and athrob with the alarums and excursions of the greatest war the world has ever known, my memory carries me back to the day just upon sixty years since when all London was abroad far into the night celebrating the blessed peace that had come to us after the agonies of the Crimea.

I gaze from my window into the blacked-out expanse of the park, and I see once again the skies of that memorable May night ablaze. From Hyde Park, from Victoria Park, from St. James's Park, and from Primrose Hill a thousand devices in golden flame have been hurled into the air.

But no fireworks of joy flame in the night skies above me in the year that we have just entered upon.

The London that I look back upon is a Dickensy London, a Cruikshank London, an Albert Smith London, a John Leech London; it is a London of "characters," a London

in which men of high degree and low degree alike wear a high hat. The beggar begs in one, the burglar burgles in one, the cricketer plays in a classic match in one, the swell and the sweeper, the legislator and the lamplighter, the Pentonville cornet player and the Pall Mall clubman, all pass similarly headgeared in the human panorama of the pavement.

I see a dimly lighted London, not quite so dim as it is to-day, but nearly so. When Thomas Hood wrote "Where the lamps quiver," for poetry's sake and as a rhyme to "river," he might with equal truth have written "flicker." The lights of London in those far-off days flickered in every breeze.

But I see a gayer London by night than the twentieth century has ever known. Long after midnight certain streets of the West, and notably the Haymarket, are packed with a roystering mob seeing life. But animal spirits are not the only spirits that contribute to the riotous gaiety.

I remember the London of Sayers and Heenan, and the last glory of the old prize-ring.

I remember a London of open betting and leviathan pencilling, when a hundred thousand pound book would be made on the Chester Cup, and horses that were literally dead were backed for months after their decease.

I remember the Derbys of the green veils and dolled white hats. Thormanby, Kettledrum, Caractacus, and Blair Athol flash past the winning-post again. The snowstorm Derby of Hermit is run again in my midnight dream of the past. The figures of Admiral Rous, of General Peel, and George Payne and the Marquess of Hastings and Count de Lagrange rise from the turf to live and move and have their being again upon it.

I think back to a London whose theatres were "half price at nine o'clock" and where 12.30 was the ordinary hour for the final curtain to fall.

And, after that, oysters were sixpence a dozen, and there were more oyster shops in the Strand than there are in the whole of London to-day.

I look back to the time when Charles Kean, Phelps, Ben Webster, Charles Fechter, Wright, Paul Bedford, Charles

Mathews, John Baldwin Buckstone, Helen Faucit, Mrs. Keeley, Miss Glyn, Miss Woolgar (who became the wife of Alfred Mellon), Mrs. Stirling, and Madame Celeste were the footlight stars.

I am in a London that has gone mad in its enthusiasm for Jenny Lind. I remember Adelina Patti's first appearance and Mario's "Farewell."

I remember Astley's Amphitheatre when the programme was "Horsemanship and Opera."

I see again in the theatre of St. Stephen's Lord Brougham with a nose that *Punch* was never tired of dwelling upon, and little Lord John Russell, and Palmerston—in *Punch*—with the eternal straw between his lips. I listen to the glorious voice of John Bright; I delight once more in the bulldog tenacity of Old Tear 'em.

I watch and listen while Gladstone and Disraeli gradually come to their own.

I see a mighty mob of people marching behind a black flag through the busy streets and pillaging the bakers' shops.

I see the Iron Duke, the great Captain, borne through the mourning populace to his resting-place at St. Paul's.

I pick my way over muddy, broken roadways, among three-caped Jarvies perched upon ramshackle cabs, and I watch the lumbering buses jolt and rattle over the stones, and every bus is strewn inside with dirty straw.

I come to a Fleet Street in which literary Bohemia smokes short clay pipes in the streets and lounges at tavern bars, fortifying itself for the night's work with goblets of steaming hot brandy and water and Irish whisky: "A slice of lemon and one lump, please." Soda water is for the morning reflection, not for the evening entertainment.

I pass a Newgate outside which the bodies of dead men are swinging to make an early morning London holiday.

I see the London merchant and the London banker make their way on horseback to the heart of the City for the day's work, and I see them riding home again when evening falls.

And as I look far away to the London of my boyhood old familiar cries ring in my ears. I hear "Cherry Ripe" and

"Who'll buy my Lavender?" and "Buy a Broom," and "Scissors to grind," and in the silence of the night I hear the top-hatted policeman spring his rattle.

And looking back upon the living London of bygone days I turn from the dark skies that shroud the cradle of baby 1916, and sit down to write my memories of a London that in its wildest imaginings had no dream of Zeppelins or motor-cars or phonographs, and only a dim idea of the telephone; a London so far away from X-rays that it was filled with awe and wonder when it heard of the use of chloroform for surgical operations.

The clock strikes one. The New Year is already an hour old. It is time that for these reminiscences I should be born.

CHAPTER I

"SOMEWHERE in London," at six o'clock on September 2, 1847, an event occurred which was to have a far-reaching consequence. That consequence was the appearance in the year 1916 of these reminiscences.

It was on the eve of the anniversary of the Battle of Worcester that I first saw the light, the light of a soft September evening. The anniversary was well chosen, for my mother was a Worcester girl, and had intended that I should be born in the Faithful City, but like the good Cockney that I have always been, I preferred London.

It was not long, however, before I found myself in Worcester, and it was there at St. Nicholas' Church that I was christened.

But though I was christened at Worcester I have from my birth been a Londoner, fated

*To float on London's human tide,
An atom on its billows thrown,
But lonely never, nor alone.*

I had quite youthful companionship from the very beginning, for when I was born my mother was eighteen and my father was nineteen, a circumstance which permitted me to be present at his coming-of-age and make a speech, and my speech bears eloquent testimony to the temperate character of the celebration.

The words that I uttered—they were my first—were "A bop o' tea." It was my first attempt to get the monotony of a milk diet varied, and I have remained faithful to the substitute ever since.

As I shall probably never write my reminiscences again, I may as well avail myself of this opportunity and give a few of the early details which are considered essential in an

autobiography. If you do not place something of your family history on record it is sometimes invented for you, and it generally does you less justice than you would do yourself.

For instance, I read not long ago in a weekly publication that I was of Semitic origin and foreign extraction, and I think the editor, a playful Irishman, was anxious to convey the impression that the foreign extraction was Teutonic. People will hint at anything in war-time.

Let me then say at once that I am not only a Londoner, but quite English, you know. And yet I suppose there is a little foreign blood in me—just a wee drappie—and it came about in this way.

My great-grandfather, Robert Sims, was a sturdy, handsome and well-to-do Berkshire yeoman. To the Berkshire town into which he rode regularly on market days there came a Spanish grandee, Count José de Montijo, who was of the family which gave us the Empress Eugénie. He had left Spain as a political refugee, and his daughter, the Countess Elizabeth de Montijo, had come with him.

My great-grandfather fell in love with the beautiful Spanish girl, and married her. She was quite a young girl when she became his wife, but she “lived happily ever afterwards,” and died a dear old English lady at the age of eighty-five. That is the drop of foreign blood. There is no more, and the rest of me is quite as English as it could be.

My grandfather, Robert Sims, the son of the Berkshire yeoman and the Spanish countess, married Mary Hope, daughter of William Hope. She was one of the Hopes of Brighthelmstone, or Brighton as we call it now.

The Hopes were the Pickfords of Brighton in the days before the railways. They were strict Nonconformists, and mortally offended the Prince Regent by refusing to convey his race-horses on Sunday. In the family Bible I find that William Hope, who was sprinkled at the Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel, was in later life baptized by the Rev. Mr. Gough at the Baptist Chapel in Bond Street, Brighton, and became a deacon of that chapel.

Some of the Hopes, my great-uncles, lie in Bunhill Fields,

and are buried in the coveted place of honour near the tomb of John Bunyan.

Many a pious pilgrimage did I have to make as a child to see the tomb of John Bunyan "with the Hopes around him." The old burial-ground, the green garden of rest in the heart of the City, was the Campo Santo of Dissent, and the nearer you lay to the author of "The Pilgrim's Progress" the more fortunate you were considered as a corpse.

Macaulay bore testimony to this fact when he said, "Many Puritans, to whom the respect paid by Roman Catholics to the reliques and tombs of their saints seemed childish or sinful, are said to have begged with their dying breath that their coffins might be placed as near as possible to the coffin of the author of 'The Pilgrim's Progress.'"

In our family Bible I find the position of the Hope graves duly noted.

"William Hope, son of William and Phoebe Hope, died at his sister's at Peckham on Thursday, July 28, 1842, and was buried at Bunhill Fields Burial Ground, situated 26 East and West, 24 and 25 North and South, about one yard from Bunyan's tomb, on Tuesday, August 2nd, 1842."

My father was the son of Robert Sims and the "sister at Peckham," and there was no mistake as to the Englishness of the family into which he married.

These are days when any man may be forgiven if he takes pride in tracing himself back to Nelson. I cannot do that, but on my mother's side I can get into very close touch with the national hero.

Among my ancestors is an Admiral Parker. I was always under the impression that it was Sir Hyde Parker, but I find on consulting the family archives that it was not that famous sea-dog. At any rate, my Admiral Parker had a daughter named Margaret who married Charles Yardley of Hindlip Hall in Worcestershire, the Hall with the famous Jesuit's Hole.

It afterwards passed into the possession of the Allsopps, and gave Lord Hindlip his title.

One of the young Yardleys—Tom Yardley—was a midshipman on Admiral Parker's ship, and was killed at the Battle of Copenhagen.

The son of the Yardley-Parker marriage, Charles Yardley, married Elizabeth Partridge, and this marriage eventually gave me as cousins dear old William Yardley—"Bill of the Play" of the *Sporting Times*, who was the first man to make a hundred for his 'Varsity—and Samuel Partridge, of the Religious Tract Society. Both of them had something to do with my early introduction to journalism and the stage.

Charles Yardley had by his marriage with Elizabeth Partridge a daughter, Mary Yardley, who married John Dinmore Stevenson, and was my maternal grandmother.

My father was riding through a London street one day when his horse shied at something and nearly threw him. He heard a musical female voice exclaim "Oh!" and looking in the direction of the sound he beheld a pretty girl of seventeen at a window.

He thought she was the prettiest girl he had ever seen, and determined to find out who she was, and obtain an introduction. He found that she was Miss Stevenson, a Worcestershire girl who was on a visit to London.

The shying of my father's horse provided the introduction, and gave me an old English sea-dog for an ancestor.

Having disposed of my ancestors, and proved that in spite of all temptations to belong to other nations I have remained an Englishman, I am now free to indulge in my own reminiscences of the "Hungry Forties"—and after.

CHAPTER II

OF life in London in the late forties I have, of course, only a vague remembrance. My own experiences were rather monotonous, but there was plenty of adventure going on around me.

Among the family relics that I have preserved is a rather elaborate staff of a special constable. It looks like a ruler with a brass crown on the business end of it.

This staff is connected with a period of intense anxiety through which my mother passed when I was still an infant in her arms.

My grandfather, John Dinmore Stevenson, was one of the leaders of the Chartist movement. An oil painting of him with the Charter rolled up under his arm hangs in my bedroom to-day, and whenever I gaze at it I remember that he was looked upon as a very dreadful person simply because he advocated reforms almost every one of which has since been accepted as essential to the public well-being. The Chartists demanded: (1) The extension of the right of voting to every male native of the United Kingdom; (2) equal electoral districts; (3) voting by ballot; (4) annual Parliaments; (5) no property qualification for members; (6) payment of Members of Parliament for their services.

But in 1848 the Chartists made the strategic mistake of threatening to use force in order to obtain their demands. That is where the story of the special constable's staff comes in.

My maternal grandfather went off to join the Chartists in the great demonstration on Kennington Common, and to act as one of their leaders in the threatened advance upon Westminster, and my father was at the same time sworn in as a special constable, and armed with his staff of office went

forth with Louis Napoleon to protect London from my grandfather.

The Kennington Common affair was a terrible fiasco. The heavens, I believe, wept over it so profusely that the ardour of the rebels was damped in the deluge.

At any rate, the fates preserved my father from having to use his staff upon the head of his father-in-law. My grandfather came back to our house soaked to the skin, changed his clothes, and sat down to tea with the special constable. And there was peace between them. I was the olive branch on that occasion.

I do not know whether it was that my mother and father were considered to be too young to have the direction of my babyhood, but I know that during the first few years of my life my grandfather was my constant companion, my guide, philosopher, and friend.

In those days naughty little boys were always denounced as "little Radicals." If you broke the nursery window or hit your little sister on the head with a hair-brush, or used your shilling box of paints to heighten the effect of the pattern on the drawing-room paper, the first words of remonstrance you heard were, "Oh, you little Radical! What have you been up to now?"

You see, Radicalism did not rank so high in public estimation in those days as it did, say, at the last General Election.

But my grandfather's companionship made me a little Radical in the sense in which the word is used to-day. It was my grandfather, the old Chartist, who shaped my early political views.

I have a dim remembrance of his reading aloud to me from certain of the Radical papers of the period, and a vivid remembrance of his reading to me the story of Garibaldi's sufferings, and I can see the tears running down his cheeks as he read.

I remembered that incident very distinctly when I saw Garibaldi drive in triumph through the streets of London amid the frantic cheers of the people, and I regretted that my grandfather had not lived to see his hero face to face.

Garibaldi remained in the memory of the English people for years after that. The Garibaldi shirt was adopted by

the fair, and has never been abandoned by them, but to-day we call it a "blouse," and the Americans call it a "shirt-waist." And the Garibaldi biscuit is still with us.

It revived old memories when I saw some of the ancient Red Shirts turn out and march through London under the Italian flag when Italy had decided to throw in her lot with the Allies in the great fight for the freedom of the world from the tyranny of the Huns.

Of the very early days my memories are naturally rather misty, but I have a vivid remembrance of an event that happened when I was five years old.

On November 18, 1852, the great Duke of Wellington was buried at St. Paul's, and I was taken by my father and mother and my grandfather to see the funeral procession pass.

I think it must have been very early in the morning when we left our home in Islington, for the impression of a grey atmosphere has always remained with me. I can see the soldiers now as I saw them then, misty figures in that grey atmosphere.

But clearly and distinctly I can see the funeral-car bearing the body of the great Duke, and more clearly still a riderless charger that was led immediately behind the car. The reversed boots that hung from the empty saddle stirred my childish imagination so strongly that the picture has never faded.

The silence of the great crowd, the car, and the riderless horse are all that I can remember distinctly of the funeral, but there are details connected with the day which I also remember.

We had seats in a shop window in Fleet Street. I believe it was a coffee-shop. The shop was closed in by an old-fashioned window with a number of panes of glass.

Every seat behind that window was occupied, and after an hour or two the occupants began to feel the effect of the atmosphere. It was suggested that some panes of glass in the window should be broken to admit a little fresh air, and it was proposed that every one should make a small contribution to compensate the proprietor. Every one agreed

with the exception of an elderly Scotsman, who absolutely declined to part with a bawbee.

It was decided to do without his contribution and admit the fresh air, and the moment the first pane had been knocked out the old Scotsman thrust his head through the aperture and gasped, "Thank goodness. In another minute I should have been suffocated."

It is sixty-three years since I saw the dead Duke borne through the sorrowing multitude to his last resting-place, yet there is another incident which, though it took place after the funeral was over, has remained in my memory.

As soon as the procession had passed, my father and my grandfather left us—the one to go to the office in the City and the other to the office of the Reform Freehold Land Society, in which he was interested. And then my mother took me home to Islington.

I was very tired. I had been up since four in the morning, and I began to cry. Street hawkers were standing along the kerb in Fleet Street, and some of them were selling penny coloured picture-books.

In the hope of distracting my mind and stopping my tears my mother bought one of the books and gave it to me. It was the story of "Puss in Boots." It was intelligent anticipation on my mother's part, as sixty-three years later I was one of the collaborators of Mr. Arthur Collins in reproducing that story for the Christmas pantomime at Drury Lane.

It was soon after I had seen the Duke of Wellington's funeral that I paid my first visit to the play.

We were living in Islington, not very far from Sadler's Wells Theatre. My father had taken an old-fashioned house there because he was in the habit of riding to and from Aldersgate Street, where, at London House, the former residence of the Bishop of London, he carried on his business.

Sadler's Wells, which was within easy walking distance of our house, was then the equal of any of the West End theatres.

Samuel Phelps had become the lessee, and had revived

the fame and fortune of the once famous playhouse. Under his management it had become the home of Shakespearean drama.

What Henry Irving was to the English stage in my young manhood Samuel Phelps was to the English stage in my childhood.

The Sadler's Wells audience was in those days an audience of keen critics, with a wonderful textual knowledge of the plays of Shakespeare. If an actor forgot his lines there was always an amateur prompter in the pit or gallery to give him the missing words.

My mother was an enthusiastic playgoer, and found the proximity of Sadler's Wells, with its fine productions and the admirable acting of Phelps and his company, a great blessing.

And so it happened that on one memorable occasion, after extracting from me a solemn promise that I would be good and sit as still as a mouse and not ask questions out loud, she took me with her.

It was a memorable occasion, not only in my annals, but in the annals of the British drama, for it was the first night of Phelps's magnificent production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

That was on October 8, 1853, so that when I made my debut as a playgoer and first-nighter I was six, and Sadler's Wells, Shakespeare, and Samuel Phelps had the honour of being associated with the event.

Samuel Phelps controlled the fortunes of Sadler's Wells for eighteen years, and I was present as a youth of fifteen at his final performance in the theatre, at which, during his successful and artistic management, he had produced thirty-four of Shakespeare's plays.

In connexion with my early association with Sadler's Wells there is an event in which the long arm of coincidence was at work.

At my first school, which was "somewhere in Islington," there was a boy named Hoskins, who was my first real "chum." Young Hoskins shone among his little school-fellows and playmates with a reflected glory. His father was an actor at Sadler's Wells, and he, because I was a

friend of his little boy, would often stop and talk to me in the street.

Now my first public appearance as a journalist was in the dock at the Guildhall Police Court. I had written something in *Fun* which was intended to be satirical and humorous. It was a letter addressed to "a fashionable tragedian," and it called attention to the number of plays produced at the Lyceum Theatre in which Henry Irving had played the part of a murderer.

One paper—I fancy it was the *Saturday Review*—said that the article had been written "by a young gentleman named Sims of whom nothing has been previously heard, and of whom nothing will probably be heard again."

But all the newspapers quoted one line of the luckless letter. I accused the fashionable tragedian of having "canonized the cut-throat and anointed the assassin."

"Papa" Bateman—we called him "Papa" because of his three clever children, the Bateman sisters—was the manager of the Lyceum, with Irving as the star, and Bateman, who was a good showman, saw in the undoubted libel the article contained a chance for bold advertisement. So on Christmas Eve Mr. George Lewis—he was not Sir George then—applied at the Guildhall Police Court for a summons against the printer of *Fun*.

The first intimation I had of the fact was when I bought the *Western Morning News* at Penzance railway station on Boxing Day morning. I had gone to Penzance to spend Christmas with my mother, who was wintering there.

The summons against *Fun* was returnable the day after Boxing Day, so I took the first train to town, and presented myself at Guildhall Police Court on the next morning, went into the witness-box and confessed myself the author of the libel.

"I am the author of this letter," I said, "and I have come five hundred miles to say so."

It was a good little speech, but George Lewis marred its effect by jumping up and handing me a Bradshaw, and asking me to look at Penzance.

"Now, sir," he said, "you tell us that you have come five hundred miles, and you say that you have come from

Penzance. Penzance, according to the official railway measurement, is three hundred and twenty-six and a half miles from London. A liberal discount has evidently to be taken off any statement you may make."

The result of my admission was that I was accommodated with a seat in the dock by the side of Mr. Henry Sampson, the editor of *Fun*, who also acknowledged his liability, and together we listened to the evidence.

It was really more of a theatrical matinée than a judicial inquiry. Sir Robert Carden made humorous remarks which were intended to be serious from the Bench, John L. Toole gave comic evidence which was interrupted by roars of laughter, Frederic Clay, the composer, who was afterwards to be my great friend and collaborator, came into the witness-box to testify that he had read the article and was convinced that it referred to Henry Irving, and Dion Boucicault, who arrived late to say the same thing, had to fight his way into the court through the mob which had gathered outside to see the celebrities.

Towards the middle of the second day's hearing Henry Irving, who had quite unwillingly taken part in the affair, insisted that the thing had been carried quite far enough, and that he would be satisfied with an apology. And that is how my first public appearance as a journalist ended.

The editor published a nice little apology in *Fun*, and I went round the next day to Irving's chambers in Grafton Street and had a chat with him, and he was afterwards my very good friend.

And now the long arm of coincidence comes in. Soon after my friendly meeting with Irving I learnt that it was through a visit to Sadler's Wells in 1855 that he became acquainted with an actor named Hoskins. Irving told me that in those days he had to be in a City office at nine o'clock, but Hoskins would let him come to his house at eight in the morning to have a lesson.

Hoskins, the first actor I ever spoke to and whom I knew in my childhood, had been the first stage tutor of the actor whose first manager of the Lyceum issued a police court summons against me in my young manhood, and it was

on a letter of recommendation from Hoskins that Irving obtained his first engagement on the regular stage.

But I was more than seven when the Irving adventure brought back to my memory the little Hoskins of my first school, and so far as these reminiscences are concerned I have not yet attained that interesting and classic age.

CHAPTER III

ALL through my life there has been a remarkable re-entrance of characters associated with the prologue of my little everyday drama into the later acts.

One of my earliest reminiscences after the Duke of Wellington's funeral and Shakespeare at Sadler's Wells is that of a first visit to a little chapel in Hare Court, Barbican.

My grandfather, Robert Sims, was a Sandemanian or Glassite, and his greatest and dearest friend was Michael Faraday, the famous chemist, who was one of the elders.

My father was never a member of the little community. Both he and my mother were Church of England, but they used occasionally to take me and my sister to the chapel on Sundays to see our grandfather.

Among the elders of the chapel whom I knew as a child were Professor Faraday and John Boosey, the uncle of the William Boosey of the present day. Another of the elders was Benjamin Vincent, who was, I believe, the secretary of the Royal Institution, of which Faraday was the shining light.

The Sandemanian service was a curious one, and the elders used to preach or "expound" in a curious way. The idea was to use as few words of their own as possible, and so their sermons or expositions consisted of a series of passages from the Scripture strung together by the aid of a "but," a "though," or an "and."

At this little chapel in Hare Court Michael Faraday once stood up before the congregation to apologize humbly for having in one of his lectures at the Royal Institution formulated an idea which was in a way opposed to the teaching of the Scriptures as accepted by the Sandemanians.

The Sandemanians came, most of them, from distant parts of London for their Sunday services. There was no

Underground Railway in those days, and no swift motor-buses, and as the morning service was not over till one o'clock the question of the midday meal had to be considered.

In order that the members of the congregation who lived far away might remain for the afternoon service a meal was prepared and served in a room attached to the chapel. The meal was served cold with the exception of the soup, which was always Scotch broth.

To the Feast of Friendship, as it was called, children were not admitted, so I and my sister and the other children who had been brought by their parents remained in the pews and were there served with Scotch broth and sandwiches.

Among the children who took Scotch broth on Sundays in the pews of the chapel in Hare Court was, I am told, a little boy named Fred Barnard. Another child was Miss Alice Faraday, a daughter of James Faraday, the Professor's brother. I do not know if they first fell in love with each other over the Scotch broth at Hare Court Chapel, but I do know that when they grew up pretty Alice Faraday became the wife of Fred Barnard, the young artist.

I did not go to the Sandemanian Chapel after I was ten, being mostly away at school, but when long years afterwards Mr. Gilbert Dalziel commissioned me to write for the *Pictorial World* a series of articles on the conditions under which the poor were living in certain parts of London, he introduced me to the artist who was to accompany me and make the sketches.

The artist was Fred Barnard, who had won great fame by his black-and-white work and the clever pictures he had painted and exhibited at the Royal Academy.

The best known then were *The Crowd Before the Guards' Band*, *The Barber's Shop*, and *Saturday Night in the Borough*.

Of the wonderful trips we made together into the darkest byways of a London that would be impossible to-day I shall have something to say later on.

To his artistic soul the monotony of "the scenery and costumes" did not appeal.

Poor Barnard's fate was a sad one. He undoubtedly became mentally unhinged. On one occasion he went to

stay with a friend, and was discovered leaving the house early in the morning with nothing on but his boots, trousers, and hat. He had painted his body scarlet to represent a Salvation Army vest, and he had adorned his chest with the words "Blood and Fire."

In September 1896 he was staying with a friend at Wimbledon. On Sunday, the 27th, the maid called him at half-past eleven. He said that he would be up shortly, but he evidently went to sleep again.

Two hours later smoke was seen coming from the window of his bedroom. The door was locked, and all attempts to open it failed till the fire brigade arrived. But they had come too late, for the clothes were one mass of flame, and Fred Barnard was found in the midst of them, still alive, but unable to utter a word before he died.

A pipe found lying on the floor gave the clue to the tragedy. He had been smoking in bed and had set fire to the clothes.

I do not know if Mr. William Boosey, of Chappell's, ever attended a Sandemanian service. He is a younger man than I am, so he could not have had Scotch broth with me, but his uncle, one of our elders, was a member of the firm of music publishers in Regent Street, and my first musical venture, "A Dress Rehearsal," with Louis Diehl as the composer, was published by the Booseys and is still sold by them.

And when I wrote my first comic opera with Ivan Caryll it was William Boosey, John Boosey's nephew, who secured the publishing rights for Messrs. Chappell.

It is curious that out of such a small community so many should, after the lapse of over a quarter of a century, have become associated with me when I took to journalism and dramatic authorship.

It is the more curious seeing that it was a community with very strong views concerning Sunday newspapers and the theatre. The Bible was the only book the eyes of the religious might rest upon on the "Sabbath," and a visit to the Polytechnic or the Colosseum in Regent's Park was the nearest approach to dissipation permitted to the young at holiday time.

Appreciating the strictness of the Sandemanian views it is a remarkable circumstance that it is in the theatrical world that the names borne by the Sandemanian elders survive to-day.

The Michael Faraday who gave us *The Chocolate Soldier* and *The Girl in the Taxi* at the Lyric Theatre is named after his relative, the famous scientist and the humble Sandemanian elder. And the name of William Boosey is famous in the world of light opera and musical comedy.

It was when I was nine that I went to my first real school, a boarding school. It was "A Preparatory School for Young Gentlemen," situated in The Grove, Eastbourne, and was kept by the Misses Shoosmith.

Nearly sixty years ago! And as I write these lines there lies before me a message of thanks for a Christmas remembrance that an old lady at Eastbourne sent me in the last week of nineteen-fifteen. And the old lady was one of the Misses Shoosmith of The Grove Preparatory School.

Eastbourne was then a very different seaside town from what it is to-day. The residential portion on the front did not extend far beyond the Burlington Hotel at one end, and at the other end the Albion Hotel was the last residential building of any importance. Beyond the Burlington were cornfields, and beyond the Albion was beach.

Where the magnificent motor rolls its lordly way were Sussex lanes, along which plodded the Sussex peasant in a white smock and a high black hat, rendered rusty by wind and weather.

The railway station was quite a rural affair, and opposite it was an old-fashioned inn which was the Railway Hotel.

Eastbourne was then a fashionable resort, especially in the late autumn, but it had not achieved the fame and the popularity that it enjoys to-day.

There was an air of old-world peace about it always, a peace which was occasionally disturbed by the sea, which had a habit at certain periods of the year of invading the "front," and hurling angry billows plentifully charged with pebbles against the windows of the picturesque little houses, and leaving sufficient of itself behind to enable the tenants

to have sea-water baths in their own apartments without the trouble of going to the sea to fetch the water.

In those days the then Duke of Devonshire was referred to affectionately by Eastbourne as "My Uncle," and was in frequent residence at his lovely place, which bore locally the charming name of "Paradise."

The sudden development of Eastbourne made many local fortunes. Some of the tradespeople who had bought land found themselves on the high road to a wealth of which they had never dreamed. One of the tradesmen, who used to supply my school and leave his goods himself, made enough money out of the boom to have a carriage and pair, a carriage of the chariot order, with a coachman and footman in gorgeous livery.

The Grove is now a busy shopping thoroughfare. When I first made its acquaintance it was a leafy lane, and my old school-house stood in spacious grounds. The front of it looked on to hedgerows, and the back of it on to the green hills.

There was no Duke's Drive to Beachy Head. The only way to go was by the coastguard's track along the cliffs.

In South Street, which is now a thriving thoroughfare, there was an old inn, and adjoining the inn a field separated from the roadway by a low pebble wall. In this field there was a little wooden theatre to which every now and then a company of strolling players would come and perform to, I fear, but scanty local patronage.

I remember that a few bills of the play were stuck about on five-barred gates and the backs of wooden buildings, and they generally announced "a thrilling drama."

I was never allowed to witness a tragedy at the wooden theatre, but I had a very narrow escape from being mixed up in a real tragedy as terrible as any the strolling players had in their repertoire.

I went to Eastbourne a white-faced weakling, and there I grew into a healthy lad. When, after a time, I became too old for a preparatory school, my mother wished me to remain at Eastbourne, and my father was on the point of sending me to another scholastic establishment in that charming sea-coast town when a friend strongly recom-

mended him to send me to a college at Hanwell kept by the Rev. J. A. Emerton.

But for this change of plan I should have been transferred from the Grove to No. 22 Grand Parade, where there was also "A School for Young Gentlemen." The proprietor and head master was a Mr. Thomas Hopley. When we little boys of The Grove were taking our daily walk along the Parade, walking two and two, we used constantly to meet the Hopley boys walking two and two.

On April 22, 1860, it became known all over Eastbourne that a terrible tragedy had occurred the previous night at 22 Grand Parade.

One of the pupils, a boy of sixteen, named Reginald Cancellor, had been found dead in his bed, and the rumour went round that he had been thrashed to death by Mr. Hopley.

An inquest was held on Cancellor, and the verdict was that there was no evidence to show how he came by his death.

But the police took the matter up, and Mr. Hopley was brought before the magistrates on a charge of manslaughter, and there was plenty of evidence to show that the poor boy had been brutally done to death by a merciless master who had thrashed him for two hours with maniacal fury.

At the end of two hours' thrashing the boy died, and Mr. Hopley summoned his distressed and horrified wife to assist him in rearranging the scene of the tragedy.

The blood with which the floor was spattered was wiped up, the battered body of the boy was covered with a white nightgown, long white stockings were drawn over the lacerated legs, and the bruised and bleeding hands were thrust into a pair of white kid gloves.

Hopley's idea was to give out the cause of death as heart failure, and to get the body buried as quickly as possible and without an inquest.

When he was tried for manslaughter Hopley contended that he had been compelled to chastise the boy in order to drive the wicked spirit out of him. He had thrashed him mercilessly for two hours, and at the end of that time he had succeeded in his object. The spirit had left the body for ever.

Hopley's defence was a farrago of such canting hypocrisy that the case became a sensational one all over the country.

He was tried at Lewes before Lord Chief Justice Cockburn. Serjeant Parry prosecuted, and Serjeant Ballantine defended. Hopley was found guilty of manslaughter, and sentenced to four years' penal servitude.

In Lewes Gaol he wrote a pamphlet in which he defended his conduct from the point of view of the disciplinarian. The unfortunate boy had refused to learn as rapidly as the schoolmaster wished him to. He had been so stubborn in his wickedness that he "would not even make an effort to repeat the prismatic colours in their proper order."

I was very glad, when I read the evidence, that my father had at the last moment decided not to send me to Hopley's. I do not think that even now I could repeat the prismatic colours in their proper order.

A few years ago my old school, The Grove, had its little day of fame again.

The Duke of Devonshire had decided that the old house should be pulled down. One of the Misses Shoosmith who still remained in it resented the order, refused to leave, barricaded herself in, and for a time The Grove was a miniature "Fort Chabrol."

The Duke was very considerate and very kind to the old lady, but the old place had to go, and eventually it was levelled to the ground.

And from one of the old ladies who kept my first school, and who on more than one occasion took the birch out of the drawer where it was kept—I can see that drawer now—and administered it for my special benefit, I received a kindly greeting only last Christmas Day.

After leaving Eastbourne I went to Hanwell College. On the note-paper it was called "Hanwell Military College."

The head master was the Rev. Dr. Emerton, and he took in a number of boarders to be crammed for the Army. That is how it became a military college, and it was there that I had my first experience of military life, for very soon after I had joined I was wearing Her Majesty's uniform, and being trained for home defence.

There was a good deal of talk about invasion in the early

'sixties, and the volunteer force became highly popular. Of course it was very unfavourably regarded by the military authorities—volunteer forces always are—and it came in for a tremendous amount of chaff from the ready-witted urchins of the pavement.

The pride of many a whiskered warrior as he strutted along with his rifle on his shoulder and his Piccadilly weepers sportively toyed with by the breezes, was hurt by the cry of "Who shot the dog?" which pursued him relentlessly as he went his martial way.

It was one of the whimsies of the masses, and had as great a vogue as "What a shocking bad hat!" "There he goes with his eye out!" and "Where are you going on Sunday?" the correct answer to which, I believe, was, "Up the river in a hansom and down the Old Kent Road in a steamboat."

It was Louis Napoleon, the special constable of the Chartist riots, who caused the invasion scare.

It was generally believed that, forgetting the hospitality England had given him in his days of exile, he had determined to copy the first Napoleon, and in furtherance of this idea had completed a magnificent scheme for the invasion of the shores of perfidious Albion.

Wimbledon had become the volunteer war centre. The Queen had reviewed eighteen thousand volunteers there and eleven thousand in Hyde Park, and all over the country thousands of citizens were donning uniform and drilling and learning to use the rifle effectively.

The Hanwell boys became the Cadet Corps of, I think, the 30th Middlesex Rifles. We wore pepper-and-salt uniforms and high shakos adorned with dark green cocks' feathers.

Monsieur Obert, our French master—he had translated "The Deserted Village" into French—wore the uniform of a captain, although, as we told him on more than one occasion, he was a "froggy" himself.

Herr Kruger, our German master, pleaded that he was an officer in his own country and could not wear the trappings of an amateur in ours. But most of the other masters wore pepper and salt, and our Colonel was Mr. Wolseley Emerton.



ADELINA PATTI

the principal's son, who was "all Sir Garnet" because he took his front name from the Wolseley family to which he was related.

We wore our uniform every day and all day long, only abandoning it on Sundays, when we wore civilian clothes and mortar-boards.

We drilled three times a day, and those of us who were old enough were instructed in the use of the rifle.

All went well for a time, but gradually the uniforms wore out. The trousers, as will happen with the best regulated boys, went first, and the shakos, owing to the unceremonious manner in which they were treated, went next, and then Hanwell boys were to be seen in the village wearing the volunteer tunic, check or fancy pattern trousers, and a billycock or straw hat. And, just as I had been raised to the proud position of sergeant, the cadet corps came to an inglorious end.

An old Indian colonel who lived at Hanwell saw a party of us one day in mixed civilian and military costume. He was scandalized, and gave Dr. Emerton a piece of his mind on the subject. As some of the boys' parents were not inclined to find new uniforms for their sons, the corps was disbanded, and I bade adieu to military life for ever.

But a goodly number of Hanwellians when they left the College joined a grown-up corps, and many others went into the Army, and so the two years' steady drilling they had at the old school was of good service to them.

One of the young men who came to the College to cram for the Army was the son of Mr. Weston, of Weston's Music Hall. We called him the "Star of the Weston Hemisphere."

At the time he was with us his father opened a sort of Cremorne on a small scale somewhere in Kentish Town or Highgate Road. It was called Weston's Retreat, and on Saturday evenings young Weston generally went up to town, taking a certain number of the boarders with him, and a young English master, Mr. Martin, who was the son of the editor of the then popular *Peter Parley's Annual*.

Young Martin, who was a charming fellow, rather like Lord Dundreary in appearance, had only one fault. He

always came back on Saturday night with a desire to go to bed in his boots.

He slept in a little room off the dormitory of which I was the captain, and it was frequently my midnight task to get his boots off after he had fallen into a sleep disturbed by dreams in which he gave off snatches of the latest music-hall songs.

He appreciated my services, and, knowing that I was always "scribbling" little things which were intended to be humorous, he promised that one day he would show some of my stuff to his father, the editor.

I wrote quite a number of "things" in anticipation of the event, but "Peter Parley's" son left suddenly, and then I gathered my literary efforts together and sent them in a large envelope to the editor of *Fun*.

I bought the periodical regularly every week to see if anything of mine was in it. I thought that as my manuscript had not been returned it had been accepted. At last I gave up all hope of ever seeing my work in *Fun*.

But the ambition was gratified after all. Ten years later I was on the staff of that then popular "penny comic," and among the members of the staff of *Fun* and *Hood's Annual* when I joined were W. S. Gilbert, H. S. Leigh, George Augustus Sala, Austin Dobson, Ambrose Bierce, Charles Leland, Arthur Sketchley, Godfrey Turner, and Ashby Sterry. But this is another story.

I left Hanwell at the end of 1863, and in 1864 I went to Germany—the Germany of the 'sixties that was never to be the same Germany again after the dawn of the 'seventies.

In Bonn I was placed by my father in the house of Dr. Stromberg, in the Weberstrasse. My fellow-students were a number of young men who were studying German and attending lectures and amusing themselves.

Walter Ballantine, Serjeant Ballantine's son, who afterwards became M.P. for Coventry, was a fellow-student of mine, and so was one of the Rowntrees.

Walter Ballantine and I had certain habits in common. We were both great readers, and it was our delight to spend a summer or an autumn afternoon sitting under a fruit-tree reading a French novel and eating cherries or peaches or apricots.

Fruit was very cheap in Bonn in those days. You could buy as many ripe apricots as you could conveniently eat in an afternoon for a couple of groschen, and cigars were eight pfennige—about a penny—each. Wine was sixpence a bottle, and not bad if you mixed it with sugar or strawberries or peaches. Oh, the economical luxury of those happy days!

In the intervals of reading Balzac, my favourite French author, and eating apricots, I translated Freiligrath and Schiller and Uhland into English verse of sorts, and smoked German tobacco in a long German pipe, and fell in love with a pretty *fräulein* behind the counter of a shop where the penny cigars were sold.

We went to nearly every kermesse within a dozen miles, and danced with the village maidens. We made a point of attending most of the students' duels, and played against the English elevens of Düsseldorf and Essen.

We sailed on the Rhine and we bathed in the Rhine, and it was in the Rhine that one of my chums, an American student at the University, went one evening to bathe and was drowned, and the Bonn students in full uniform gave him a torchlight funeral.

Every student in the procession, which started about eight o'clock at night, carried a flaming torch, and after the ceremony was over we returned to the banks of the Rhine and every lighted torch was flung into the river opposite the spot at which our comrade had met his fate.

There were a number of young Englishmen at Perry's in Poppelsdorf Allée, and with the Perry contingent we were frequently allied in frolics and escapades.

Lord William Beresford—he was Bill Beresford to us, as he was afterwards to thousands of admirers—was one of the most conspicuous of the bloods who were at Perry's, which was the aristocratic house. He generally wore his hat at an angle of forty-five degrees, and he was the champion at a form of nocturnal sport which was known as a candlestick match.

The old-fashioned bedroom candlestick as a weapon requires a certain amount of dexterous handling.

The game was generally played by eight, four a side, and

all in night attire. The combatants stood a certain distance apart, and then sent their candlesticks whirling through the air.

After the bout the lower limbs of the players were carefully examined for cuts and bruises. The side whose legs had the fewest cuts and bruises were the winners.

It was a rule of the game and a point of honour never to aim above the legs.

Bonn was a very different town in the 'sixties from what it became after the Franco-German War. There were no grand villas as there are to-day, and living was cheap and good, and many English families came to Bonn to economize.

But even then the English were not popular.

And so it frequently happened that after our fellows had spent a night at a popular Bierhaus we finished up with a free fight outside. We fought fairly, in the good old English fashion, but some of the lower-class Germans fought unfairly. They used to wait for us at dark corners and open proceedings by throwing empty beer-bottles at our heads.

When we had enough money for a week-end a select party of us would board the midnight boat on Saturday and disembark at Oberlahnstein for Ems early on Sunday morning.

The roulette tables at Ems, Wiesbaden, and Homburg had two zeros—single zero and double zero—but you could stake as low as a florin, and that gave you a chance of trying your luck a good many times.

My youthful experiences of the German gambling tables were many and varied. I played more than once side by side with "The Butcher Duke," as the Duke of Hamilton used to be called on account of his fondness for wearing blue shirts, and on one occasion I saw the notorious Garcia break the bank.

But my early relations with roulette were summarily snapped by an accident.

One wet evening I had no money to go out with, and so I stayed at home.

I had previously arranged with a young Englishman who lived in the opposite house a form of amusement for wet evenings. We each took a supply of crab-apples up to our

rooms, and from our open windows, which faced each other, we bombarded everybody who passed along the street with an umbrella up.

Unfortunately a famous German professor happened to pass under my window. He put down his umbrella for a moment to see if it had left off raining, and he received a heavy shower of crab-apples on his intellectual brow.

He knocked at the door furiously, and insisted upon having my name, and then, having expressed himself towards me in unclassical language, he went away.

I was summoned before the Chief of Police, who gave me a severe lecture in German, and fined me ten thalers. I did not mind having to listen to the lecture, but I objected to having to lose the thalers, and that night at Ruland's Bierhaus, when it was packed with students, I delivered myself freely of my views on German justice.

Some of the Germans made insulting remarks, and then the English and Americans took the matter up, and there was a certain amount of damage done to the glass and furniture.

This time the authorities requested Dr. Stromberg not to allow me out of the house after nightfall for a fortnight.

This was a disciplinary measure to which I strongly objected, so after being locked in my bedroom at night I opened the window, fastened my sheets together, and went down them hand over hand to the ground, where I was received with cheers by the English contingent.

Knowing that the police would be after me I did not stay in the town, but made my way to the top of the Petersberg—one of the Seven Mountains—and there in a comfortable little hotel I stayed for three or four days; then becoming reckless I ventured down into the town, entered a Gasthaus in a side street for some refreshments, and there I was promptly arrested.

This time the fine imposed upon me was too heavy for my depleted purse, and I had to telegraph home for money.

My father, who had heard of my previous escapades and my gambling proclivities, thought that I might as well go home and tempt fortune in London, where the odds would be more in my favour. So I left Bonn one afternoon *en route*

for London, and a cheering crowd of young Englishmen who sympathized with me in my fight with Kultur saw me off.

"Bill" Beresford was at the station, and he made a speech congratulating me upon the bold stand I had made against German tyranny.

Everybody insisted upon thrusting cigars—German cigars—into my pockets. When the train started I hurriedly pulled out my handkerchief to wave it to the boys I left behind me, and in the process I pulled out the cigars, which flew about in every direction, one hitting an elderly German officer on the nose, and the others falling into a German lady's lap.

I endured the withering scorn of their glances as far as Cologne, and there I changed into another compartment, and arrived in London with one cigar and one thaler in my possession.

A month later I was on a high stool in my father's office, extracting all the humour I could out of a situation which I never took very seriously.

But I had sampled "life" in Bonn, and London with its infinite possibilities lay before me.

CHAPTER IV

THE first thing that struck me when I entered my father's office in Aldersgate Street to start a mercantile career was that the environment presented facilities for the pursuance of my pet ambition, which was to be a journalist and author.

I had written poetry of sorts from the age of ten. When I was fifteen some verses of mine were printed on the back page of the halfpenny *Welcome Guest*, with an encouraging little note—it was on the Answers to Correspondents page—from the editor.

Some years afterwards, when I was chatting with my friend Miss Braddon at her Richmond home, she told me that the encouraging answer to "S. R. G." had been written by her mother, who was then editing the periodical.

I wonder how many people to-day remember that halfpenny *Welcome Guest* and its rival, the *Halfpenny Journal*, to which Miss Braddon herself anonymously contributed a thrilling serial under the title of "The Black Band, or The Mysteries of Midnight"?

I had written burlesques for my brothers and sisters to perform in the Theatre Royal Back Drawing-room, and though I had appropriated whole pages from the burlesques of H. J. Byron, printed copies of which I bought at Lacy's in the Strand, a good deal of the work was original, and there were puns of my own in them which Byron would have blushed to acknowledge.

All my father's friends said I was a nice boy, but it was a pity I "scribbled." So to cure me of "scribbling" my father decided when I came back from Bonn that I should be placed in his office and instructed in the mysteries of commerce. I did not like the idea, for I was a born Bohemian, but I had to give way.

My father was at that time a wholesale and export cabinet

manufacturer and plate-glass factor, and he carried on his business on historical premises which were his freehold property.

Aldersgate Street was from the time of the Plantagenets to that of the Stuarts the Belgravia of London, the residence of prelates and nobles, and I found myself in the heart of a land of romance that was already dear to me as a lover of London.

The premises at which my father carried on his business covered a large space of ground stretching in one direction nearly to Bartholomew Close, and London House itself, which was the frontage of the area, was formerly the palace of the Bishops of London.

It was supposed to have been at one time the town house of the Marquis of Dorchester. During the Commonwealth it was used as a State prison, and after the Restoration it became the episcopal residence of the See.

The historical associations of London House appealed to me greatly, and softened the first blow of having to enter commercial life, for which I did not feel myself particularly fitted, either by training or disposition.

There was a little dramatic story in connexion with the superstition of "three" which also appealed to me.

In the middle of the eighteenth century London House was occupied by Seddon, the eminent cabinet-maker, who carried on his business there and lived in the palatial rooms above. Even in my time these rooms were of the palatial order, with magnificent solid mahogany doors and wonderful ceilings.

The dramatic incident of "three" occurred in connexion with Seddon, the cabinet-maker. At London House the whole of his uninsured stock was burned on two occasions, and some little time after, in order to complete the chain of "three," Miss Seddon was burned to death in the house by her clothes catching fire.

The premises were so important and were of such extent, a good deal of valuable ground at the back being covered only by rambling workshops and packing-sheds and open yards, that my father had many tempting offers for the freehold, but for many years he refused to sell.

I remember that at one time the General Post Office had an idea that they would like to become purchasers, as they were extending their premises and contemplating vast building operations.

Mr. Frank Ives Scudamore was instructed to go over the premises, and I had the honour of personally conducting his tour.

I have read a good deal at various times about Frank Ives Scudamore's wit and humour and his many quaint characteristics. It will be remembered that he eventually left the G.P.O. and went to Constantinople to establish the postal system there, and that in his day he was quite a celebrity.

But on the afternoon that I took him over London House I had no opportunity of sampling his characteristic conversation. He went silently with me into the various portions of the building, and during the journey he only indulged in an occasional short grunt.

When he had seen everything he uttered one word :

"Damn !"

Then he put out his hand in token of farewell, and we parted.

I had more opportunity of conversation with a celebrity a year or two later, when one of the Brothers Mayhew, who was writing a series of commercial articles on great business houses, I believe—I forget what the title was—came to London House, and I was told off to be his guide.

On that occasion I remember that I took him into the rooms where the quicksilvering process was going on, and I told him such terrible stories of the effect of quicksilver upon the workers that when the proof of the article came to my father he held up his hands in horror.

I had indulged my romantic, or, as he called it, imaginative faculty to such an extent that the article was considered absolutely impossible.

Long years afterwards, when I was a prosperous author and Henry Mayhew had ceased to be one, he wrote me a letter reminding me of the first interview between the man who wrote "London Labour and the London Poor" and the youth who was later on to write "How the Poor Live,"

and I was able to help him over one of the—I am afraid many—critical moments of his career.

A good many years later my father did part with London House and the adjacent land. The old palace of the bishops has disappeared, and a huge block of business houses now stands on its site.

It was my joy in the days before I combined journalism with the City to roam around Little Britain and Barbican, Bartholomew Close and Cloth Fair, and the ancient ways where once reigned the glories of Bartholomew Fair, and my early pilgrimages in old Aldrichesgate and the time-hallowed haunts around it inspired me to gain the knowledge of London which was to stand me in such good stead as an author in later years.

But there was a very human side to my early life in the City, and I came into it when the spirit of Dickens still hovered over it.

You could see the Cheeryble Brothers ambling amiably on one side of a street, and Mr. Dombey striding pompously along on the other.

And a few of the City fathers still dwelt in the City and lived over their business establishments.

There was one dear old Deputy who furnished me with the material for one of my first stories. He and his elderly daughters lived over a forlorn warehouse where he carried on a business that had diminished year by year until it had become practically non-existent. But to every feast and function in the City the Deputy and his two elderly daughters were invited.

These City luncheons and banquets must have been salvation to them, for the current story was that in the intervals of City functions they lived upon the stock which still remained unsold in the warehouse.

It was a drysalter's business, and there were bottles of anchovies and herrings and things of that sort displayed on dusty shelves in the old-fashioned, small-paned windows.

The old Deputy and his daughters attended the functions of the 'sixties garbed in the fashion of the 'forties, and the old ladies, I remember, generally wore faded wreaths of roses on their grey hair.

The old Deputy died in his room above the warehouse, and then the shutters went up, and when they were taken down again the melancholy bottles of anchovies that had stood for years, the last survivors of a once prosperous past, had disappeared too.

The woe-begone windows of that City warehouse have been to me for fifty years a haunting memory of my City days.

Apart from the romantic atmosphere of my historic surroundings in Aldersgate Street I did not find City life such an unpleasant sort of existence as I had anticipated. My father's office was filled with old gentlemen who had been with the firm for many years.

The cashier and two of the principal clerks wore swallow-tailed coats, a large expanse of frilled shirt, and high black stocks. The cashier, in addition, wore a velvet skull-cap.

They took snuff out of a silver box, the lid of which they tapped in quite the classical comedy style.

The Early Victorian, Dickensy, atmosphere of our office appealed to my love of character, and when I discovered that there was a delightful double of Mr. Micawber among the artists who made the designs our travellers carried all over the country I was quite delighted.

Micawber and I used to lunch together in the artists' room. Sometimes we lunched on tinned lobster, and sometimes we cooked steak in a frying-pan on the stove.

But all our artist designers were interesting. One of them was the son of G. W. Hunt, the composer of "We don't want to fight, but, by Jingo, if we do!" and at once I breathed the atmosphere of the music-hall.

Another artist was Mr. G. J. Thompson, who encouraged my literary aspirations and collected the verses which I used to write in business hours.

Quaint characters came to the office and to the warehouse from all parts of the kingdom, and I remembered them with great advantage when I began to write stories professionally.

But my chief delight was my father's private office, in which I had a big writing-table. The private office was secluded and cosy, and it was there and upon that writing-table that I wrote stories and verses and occasionally plays

without the faintest hope of ever getting them published or produced.

Among the stories I wrote in the City office was the series afterwards published in the *Weekly Dispatch*, "Three Brass Balls." The stories were inspired by the fact that there was a pawnbroker exactly opposite us.

Among the plays I wrote on that office table was *The Lights o' London*.

Of course I ought to have done my "fancy work" at home in my own time. But I wanted to see life and know life, and the process occupied most of my leisure after-office hours.

Seeing life in London cost money, and I am afraid I had extravagant ideas. At any rate, I found my salary, good as it was, seeing that I lived in my father's house at Hamilton Terrace, insufficient for my persistent programme of theatres and music-halls, with Cremorne and the North Woolwich Gardens, the Argyle Rooms and the Holborn Casino, Highbury Barn and Caldwell's in Dean Street, Soho, thrown in, and a fondness for backing my fancy on the turf.

In my early City days when I began to follow the turf I used to put my money on at "The Ruins" in Farringdon Road in the day-time, and at a coffee-house in Foubert's Place, Regent Street, in the evening.

A friend of mine who lived in Maida Vale had backed Hermit at 66 to 1, thrown up his position in his father's office on the strength of his winnings and "gone racing," and we used to meet in the billiard-room at The Warrington, Maida Vale, of an evening, and he would give me tips. They did not often come off, but I generally had my half-crown on them at The Ruins.

At The Ruins several well-known ready-money bookmakers stood daily exhibiting their lists, and there the youth of the City flocked to put their money on. And working among the crowd were any number of sharps.

But the whole thing went on under the noses of the City police, and this form of street betting was then accepted as the habit and custom of a free people.

At the coffee-house in Foubert's Place the business was fairly straight. The bookmakers would sit in the boxes with

their lists in front of them, and you could put your money on quite comfortably, and get it if you won.

There was another public betting-place at the back of the brewery at the corner of Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road, and there were plenty of well-known "List Houses," where you could bet in ready money.

Seeing life and backing my fancy soon made me hard up, and to relieve the situation I sought the assistance of an accommodating gentleman in Holborn, a tailor who would make me a suit of clothes and discount my bill for fifteen or twenty pounds.

At one time I owed him something like a hundred and fifty pounds, but I do not think that I had had more than thirty or forty pounds cash. The balance was made up of interest on renewals.

The incident was brought to my mind quite recently in a curious way.

When the King of Italy made the amiable Mr. Oddenino of the Imperial Restaurant a Cavaliere a number of his old friends gave him a congratulatory banquet.

One of the vice-chairmen was Mr. Tom Honey, of Barnato Brothers, who during the evening made a speech. I had previously spoken and Mr. Honey took the opportunity of telling a story about me.

One day in the long ago years he went to his tailor in Holborn to try on a suit, and he found the tailor looking very disconsolate.

"Hallo," said Mr. Honey, "you look sad. Have you made a bad debt?" "No," was the reply, "but I've been paid off some money that I thought was going to earn interest for a good many years to come. Young Sims has made a success with a play, and he's taken up his bills. Just my luck!"

The play that enabled me to pay off the accommodating tailor was the one written on my office table in the City.

I got my first chance as a journalist and dramatist through not liking the liquor or the company at Kate Hamilton's, a night house in the neighbourhood of the then notorious Pantan Street.

Bad liquor and bad company were my stepping-stones to Fortune. And this is how it happened.

CHAPTER V

SOME people used to go to Mitcham in the old days for the Fair, and some for lavender. George Borrow's Sapengro or snake man used to go there to catch snakes. I am bound to confess that I have, so far as my memory serves me, only been to Mitcham once in my life.

But it was a very momentous once, for it was a turning-point in my "career." It took me out of Aldersgate Street and put me down in Fleet Street. It gave me my start not only as a journalist but as a playwright.

If I had not gone to Mitcham one winter evening long, long years ago it is quite possible that I might have become a fairly prosperous City man instead of a struggling author.

I was about five and twenty when my Fate found me. It happened that some intimate friends of my family were living at Mitcham, and the daughters of the house were anxious to have some private theatricals.

They had selected H. J. Byron's *Old Story*, and they asked me if I would stage-manage it. I agreed, and I was asked to run over to Mitcham and meet the company and rehearse the play.

Among those who were taking parts were Mr. J. F. Dillon Croker, Mr. Westmacott Chapman, and Mr. George Canton, all of them well known in amateur circles, and with a large number of acquaintances in literary and theatrical Bohemia.

After the rehearsal we came back to London by the last train. Dillon Croker bade us good night at Victoria. It was only a little after midnight, and one of the party—I think it was Canton—proposed that we should sample the night life of London.

The programme of the "Won't go home till morning" boys was generally in those days mapped out on pretty regular lines.

After the Holborn Casino and Argyle Rooms, where fair ones of a certain type had their days—or shall I say nights?—of renown, closed their doors, which was usually at midnight, the “Won’t go home till morning” boys would make their way to Mott’s, which was just off Langham Place, or to 222 Piccadilly—an establishment which was colloquially known as “The Three Swear-wordy Twos,” and is now, I think, absorbed in the Criterion building—and in these establishments they would dance and otherwise divert themselves till daylight.

The Haymarket was as busy as a fair all the long night through, and there were night houses in Panton Street and Jermyn Street and the streets around Leicester Square where you could drink bad spirits and worse wine till the early morning sun streaming in through the back windows sent you shamefacedly home.

It was quite the usual thing to come back from Cremorne at four o’clock in the morning, and wind up by going “round the houses” in the West, and thus stretching out the night’s amusement to five or six o’clock, a plan of campaign which was known as “Home with the milk in the morning.”

Cremorne! All its comedy and all its tragedy have yet to be written. The life-story of some of its proprietors would make a Balzacian volume—I shall have something to say about them later on—and so would the life-story of some of its habitués, the fair and frail, the gallant and the gay, light-hearted youth and wicked old age, frolicking Bohemia and wild-oats-sowing Belgravia, the “lights”—and shadows—of the bar, the stage, and the turf, youth having its first fling, and the blasé man about town, all frisking and frolicking, drinking and dancing, pleasuring or prowling among the shining lights. All are in the picture that comes back to my memory across a gulf of forty years.

Of those memories among the outward and visible souvenirs that remain to me are some verses written by H. J. Byron, when all Cremorne’s stock-in-trade and appurtenances were advertised for sale by auction. Here is a verse :

*“ Cream-coloured charger,” I exclaimed,
“ I mourn thy lot forlorn,”*

*And with a sigh I hurried by
The Gardens of Cream mourn.*

And I never sit down to my morning meal without being reminded of the old "Gardens of Delight," for the silver dish-covers that are used on my breakfast-table bear the stamp of "The Royal Cremorne Gardens" upon them. They were the covers used for special and distinguished supper-parties, and were given to me some years ago by a friend.

Cremorne Gardens were open in the day for a different sort of patronage. The price of admission was one shilling up to 10 P.M. and two shillings after that hour. It was one evening that De Groof, the flying man, ascended with his newly designed wings, and after attaining a certain height fell suddenly with a terrible crash on to the pavement of a Chelsea street.

I was near the spot at the time and saw the crowd rush towards the battered body and struggle to secure pieces of the dead man's shattered wings as a souvenir. Several leading articles were written in the daily papers on the tragedy, and the verdict of all of them was that man would never conquer the air.

But I have travelled from the night house to Cremorne. It was generally the other way about. Let me hasten back to the night house.

In the fulfilment of our intention to see life our little party made its way first to Coney's in Panton Street, from there to Sally Sutherland's, and thence to Kate Hamilton's, which was not far off.

I can see the company in one of these night houses now. A young man in mercantile marine uniform is leaning across the bar exchanging breezy persiflage with the golden-haired, highly coloured damsel behind it. A pretty faded girl of five and twenty is sitting on one of the couches drinking champagne with a swell of the period who wears peg-top trousers and long Dundreary whiskers.

An elderly woman with keen, evil-looking eyes is escorting two very much made-up young girls who call her "Ma," and they are sitting at a table with an elderly man who wears his hat very much on one side, and has a portion of his mouth in the same condition.

The gaiety, such as there is, is forced. The voices are harsh, the atmosphere is bad, and the liquor is worse.

I sipped the stuff in my glass at three bars, and then told my friends that I had had enough of that sort of thing and I should go home. Then one of the party had an idea.

"Don't let us break up yet," he said. "I know an awfully jolly place where we can go. A club I belong to. We can sit there and smoke and drink decent liquor. It's quite a Bohemian club—actors and authors and journalists and that sort of thing, don't you know?"

I pricked up my ears. Authors, actors, journalists, and among them there might be managers and editors! To mingle with such people, if it were only for a brief hour, would be a delight to me.

I yielded to the suggestion eagerly. We hailed a four-wheeled cab—there was no necessity to blow a whistle in those days; the cabs crawled past you in eternal procession, and you didn't have to hail them, the drivers hailed you—we got into the cab, and the clubman whose guests we were to be shouted to the driver, "Holywell Street."

Half-way down Holywell Street, that later on was renamed Booksellers' Row, we stopped at a little door, pushed it open, walked along a passage and into a long, rather low-ceilinged room, comfortably furnished with easy chairs and a big sofa, and filled with tobacco smoke and the clamour of voices.

The company consisted chiefly of actors, authors, and journalists, and their invited guests.

This was the Unity Club, the bit of old-fashioned Bohemia in London that was to be my jumping-off place for the world of authorship.

Among the members to whom I was introduced was a handsome young actor, already a public favourite and much admired on the stage by the fair portion of the audience.

I should have looked at him with even keener interest than I did could I have foreseen the future and known that nearly thirty years later I should be rung up by the *Evening News* late one winter night and asked by the editor to write there and then an appreciation of the romantic actor who had played the hero so often in my Adelphi melodramas, and who on that fateful evening of December 16, 1897, had been foully

murdered at the stage door of the Adelphi by a player of small parts who was suffering from the mania of persecution and believed that William Terriss had kept him out of an engagement.

Before I left the club on the night of my introduction to it I had been proposed as a member. A fortnight later I received a notice of my election, paid my guinea, and became a "Unitarian."

Our house dinner at the Unity was at three o'clock. Among the frequent diners were Arthur and Edward Swanborough, of the merry little Strand; David James, Tom Thorne, George Honey, George Maddick, the founder of many newspapers; Henry S. Leigh, the Caroller of Cockayne; Wilford Morgan, the singer; John Sheehan, the "Irish whisky drinker"; William Tinsley, the publisher; Tom Catling, the editor of *Lloyd's*; George Spencer Edwards of the *Era*; H. B. Farnie, the librettist; George Barrett, Wilson's brother; Walter Joyce, Savile Clarke, and occasionally Dan Chatto, who was then with John Camden Hotten in Piccadilly; Tom Oliphant, the editor of the *Weekly Dispatch*; and John Thomson, its dramatic critic.

John Thomson, a big-hearted young fellow, with a fat, baby face and large spectacles, had been Swinburne's secretary.

Thomson's mother had an apartment house in Bloomsbury, and at one time Swinburne and Savile Clarke lodged there.

One night, going in late, Savile Clarke went down into the kitchen to get some hot water for the whisky that he and Swinburne desired to take as a nightcap. Clarke, finding the kitchen door ajar, went in and was astonished to see a fat-faced boy of about sixteen sitting in front of the fire and reciting "Paradise Lost" from memory to the blackbeetles.

He went upstairs and fetched Swinburne down, and they spent the night listening to the boy, who appeared to know all the English poets, ancient and modern, by heart.

Swinburne took an interest in the boy and had him constantly with him, and it was while he was Swinburne's secretary that poor John first met Adah Isaacs Menken, the actress and poetess, with whom he fell madly in love. But that is another story.

When I first met Thomson at the Unity he was the dramatic

critic of the *Dispatch*, and wrote a column of paragraphs called "Waifs and Strays." Tom Hood had been writing the column previously, but had given it up.

I wrote a poem which I called "Jack's Story." It was inspired by Colonel John Hay's "Jim Bludso." I showed it to John Thomson. He had it set up at the *Weekly Dispatch* office and tried to get it published, but it was too daring for London editors, and eventually Ambrose Bierce took it across the Atlantic with him and got it inserted in the *San Francisco News Letter*, a paper which was founded by an Englishman, Frederick Marriott. He started the halfpenny *Chat* and many other journals in London, but they failed, and he went to America, and there he made a fortune.

The editor of *Chat* was Thomas Lyttelton Holt, a Cambridge man of good family, but a journalist of the ultra-Bohemian type, who had the reputation of having started more newspapers and publications than any man of his day. But they all started with very little capital, and Holt was always in more or less desperate straits for money.

But fortune came to him at last when, in the first flush of the railway mania, he started the *Iron Times* and railway advertisements flowed in. Then the journalist who had borrowed many a half-crown in the Street of Adventure was seen driving along Fleet Street in a carriage and pair, with a liveried footman hanging on behind.

When a *Times* leader pricked the railway bubble, Holt lost the *Iron Times* and the hard times returned to him.

When Holt resigned the editorship of *Chat* he was succeeded by a young man who was then a scene-painter's assistant at the Princess's Theatre, where his mother was acting. The name of the young man was George Augustus Sala.

At that time Sala was doing the illustrations for Edward Lloyd's *Penny Sunday Times* and also for a number of periodicals of a highly sensational order, but not of an immoral tendency as some of the later penny dreadfuls became.

My old friend Mr. Farlow Wilson, for twenty-eight years the printing manager of the house of Cassell, has left it on record that at one time Sala was told he must put more vigour into his drawings. Mr. Lloyd wrote to the artist,

"The eyes must be larger and there must be more blood, much more blood."

I once heard Sala in an after-dinner speech refer to his early adventures as an illustrator of penny fiction and to his first appearance as an editor. The paper was Frederick Marriott's *Chat*, of which, I believe, there is no copy in the British Museum.

The first man who employed Sala as an editor was Frederick Marriott of the London *Chat*, and the man who printed my first Fleet Street effort was Frederick Marriott, the proprietor of the *San Francisco News Letter*.

The poem that was published in the *San Francisco News Letter* was the first of the series which afterwards became known as "The Dagonet Ballads." I hasten to say that "Jack's Story" is not to be found in any of the "Dagonet" volumes now.

Poor Thomson was not a strenuous worker. He was fonder of talking than of writing. Bandmann, the tragedian, had announced a revival of *Narcisse* at the Lyceum for one Saturday evening. Thomson wrote his notice for the *Dispatch* on Saturday morning and went off to the seaside with a friend.

At the last moment Bandmann decided to postpone the production of *Narcisse* till Monday evening, but the *Dispatch* came out on Sunday morning with a notice of the performance, and it was a vigorous slate of Bandmann in the title rôle.

Bandmann placarded London with posters denouncing critics in general and the dramatic critic of the *Dispatch* in particular.

Thomson, to give me a chance, as he said, let me write his column in the *Weekly Dispatch*. For some weeks I wrote the paragraphs and he took the guinea, but one day he came to me and said: "Look here, my boy, the public evidently like your stuff. You had better keep the job and take the guinea." And I did. And that was my first appearance in Fleet Street as a professional journalist.

There was a good deal of mystery about poor John Thomson. He lived in one of the side roads of St. John's Wood, then playfully referred to as "The Grove of the Evangelist," and the house in which he lived was rather sumptuously furnished.

It was in this house that Thomson fell ill with a feverish cold. One evening a friend called to cheer John up, and they began discussing the poets. Thomson began to recite from memory Swinburne's "Atalanta in Calydon." When he came to a certain passage the friend stopped him and said he had not got the exact words.

Thomson, who said that he had and would prove it, got out of bed, and, bare-footed, walked out of the bedroom, down the stairs, across the hall and through a conservatory into the little library in which he knew he could find the book.

He found it, brought it back, pointed to the passage, proved that he was right, and got into bed. But he never left it again. In a few days he was dead.

I went on writing the "Waifs and Strays" for the *Weekly Dispatch* and drawing the guinea. But I was still in the City.

I have said that "Jack's Story" was my first ballad. That is not quite correct. I had previously written one called "Harcourt's Dream," but it was much too personal for publication. It dealt in free and uncensored language with the habits and customs of the most eccentric member the Unity had on its roll of membership.

We called him "The Bushranger," because he came from Australia. He lived in Dane's Inn in the day-time and came to the Unity about four o'clock in the afternoon, sat in a chair by the fire, and drank his whisky and water steadily until about nine o'clock in the evening, and then he would gradually slip out of the chair into the fireplace.

At first the waiter or a guest arriving and discovering him lying in such dangerous proximity to the hot coals would go to his assistance, but the old gentleman's language on being disturbed was of such a discouraging nature that it was ultimately decided to let him rest in peace. But in order that the fire might be properly made up he was sometimes gently and delicately pulled a little on one side.

It was at the Unity that the habit among the members of coming in and wanting chops and fried potatoes and other delicacies between four and five o'clock in the morning compelled the proprietor to have the following notice put up in the hall :

*Members are earnestly requested not
to order hot suppers after 4 a.m.*

Before I became a paid traveller in the Street of Adventure, certain adventures had happened to me, both in the newspaper world and the world of the footlights.

One night I had gone with a friend to the pit of the Queen's Theatre, of which Mr. Henry Labouchere was the lessee—he had taken it for Miss Henrietta Hodson, who was afterwards Mrs. Labouchere—and there was a scene.

The play was Tom Taylor's *'Twixt Axe and Crown*, and the beautiful Mrs. Rousby was playing the heroine.

Seated near me in the pit was a shortish, square-shouldered gentleman with long whiskers of a bright red hue. He was making audible remarks during the progress of the play, and when an official of the theatre, Mr. Morris Jacobs, the acting manager, came to him and began to remonstrate with him, the red-whiskered gentleman exclaimed, "Shut up! I want to hear Tom Taylor's history."

Thereupon the acting manager summoned his assistants, and the red-whiskered gentleman was seized by the shoulders, dragged backwards over the pit benches, and ignominiously pushed down the stone steps that led to the street.

I was an habitual pittite in those days, with old-fashioned notions as to the sacred rights possessed by the pit. I followed the fray, and when the red-whiskered gentleman landed on the bottom step I sat down beside him while he pulled himself together, and handed him my card in case he required a witness to the rough treatment he had received.

The red-whiskered gentleman was Leopold Lewis, co-editor of the *Mask* with Captain Alfred Thompson, the brilliant artist and caricaturist. Leopold Lewis was later on the author of *The Bells*.

Lewis was a solicitor as well as a Bohemian and an author, and his legal instinct prompted him to bring an action against Mr. Labouchere, the proprietor of the theatre, in the shape of a claim for damages.

The case was tried at Westminster, and I was a witness for the plaintiff. There had previously been a Bow Street case, in which Lewis had been charged with creating a dis-

turbance in the theatre, and the official reporter at Bow Street was Mr. George Grossmith, who was later known to fame as a society entertainer and the leading comedian of Savoy opera. He was not making enough money in those days to give up his post at Bow Street.

George Grossmith, as the official reporter, was summoned as a witness, in order that he might produce his shorthand notes of the evidence in the police case.

While the case was in progress Lewis, who was sitting next to me, whispered, "I shall win. There's one of my tenants on the jury, and he wants me to renew a lease."

He did win, but it was a Pyrrhic victory, for the damages awarded to him amounted to one farthing.

The evidence concerning the affray in the pit of the Queen's by the witnesses must have been rather embarrassing to the jury. Leopold Lewis's witnesses described it as one of the most disgraceful assaults upon a British subject that had ever occurred within the walls of a West End theatre. The witnesses who spoke on behalf of the management described it as merely an amiable attempt to induce a gentleman who was disturbing the audience to quit the building quietly.

The judge in his summing-up humorously suggested that one side or the other had given play to their fancy in the witness-box in a direction which approached dangerously near to deliberate perjury. What his legal mind failed to recognize was that it was merely a difference of "point of view."

After the case was over Lewis introduced me to George Grossmith, and I took him with me to the Unity Club. That was our first meeting, but it started a friendship which only ended on the day that the gay comedian played the last scene in the tragedy with which his life closed.

When *The Bells* was produced at the Lyceum I was still "unattached," but the Strand was my home from home.

Early on the evening of November 25, 1871, I was in the Strand when I saw a pair of long red whiskers coming out of a public-house, and Leopold Lewis, with a thick woollen comforter round his neck, followed the whiskers.

He was preceded by a strong odour of rum. In a wheezy voice he explained that he had a terrible cold, and he had been taking hot rum and butter for it.

Then he told me that a play of his was being produced at the Lyceum that evening, and he asked me to accompany him to the theatre.

"I don't think much of the thing," said Lewis, "but Irving fancies himself in it. Come and see how it goes."

On the night of the production of *The Bells* I sat in the stalls side by side with the author. He kept his overcoat and his muffler on, and I wore among other things a pilot jacket.

The stalls were not nearly filled, and there was very little evening dress about. It was the sort of thing that was the rule at the opera and the exception at the theatre.

The programme was a long one. It began with a farce. *The Bells* was the second item, and the third item was a version of *Pickwick* by James Albery, in which Irving, having died as the Polish Jew in *The Bells*, came to life again as Jingle.

The audience on the first night of *The Bells* was not enthusiastic. It was rather bored until the big scene of the dream with the sleigh-bells effect came, then we were gripped, and there was a big burst of applause.

Lewis thought Irving fine, but he did not fancy there was much money in the piece. We had no idea when we left the theatre that night that *The Bells* was going to take London by storm and be Henry Irving's stepping-stone to a fame that was to be world-wide.

But if *The Bells* made Irving it certainly did not make Leopold Lewis. He did very little afterwards, and remained to the end a disappointed and dissatisfied man. Irving behaved admirably to him, and stood by him to the finish. But the success of *The Bells* had given poor Lewis a false idea of his own value as a dramatist, and he became a man with a grievance, and gradually drifted out and died in the Royal Free Hospital in February 1890.

Irving had been more than generous to him, for *The Bells* was a translation of Erckmann Chatrian's *Le Juif Polonais*, and it was up to any one to do a version, so that the play itself was not in a commercial sense a property.

It was not the author who made it the enormous success that it proved, but the actor, a fact which Leopold Lewis failed unfortunately to realize.

But enormous as the success was, every one did not appreciate it. When the play was at the height of its drawing power Irving was standing one day at the porch of the Lyceum.

An old provincial actor passed by with whom Irving had been associated in his early struggle for fame.

Irving stepped out of the portico, grasped the old actor warmly by the hand and said, "Ah, my boy, I *am* pleased to see you! And how are things going?"

"Oh," said the old actor, "I'm just jogging along in the same old way. *Are you doing anything?*"

The first night of *The Bells* was my first night in the stalls, but long before I became a journalist I was an habitual first-nighter in the pit.

I was in the pit on that memorable night in 1865 when Charles Reade's *Never Too Late to Mend* was produced at the Princess's, and Frederick Guest Tomlins, who was there as a dramatic critic, rose in his seat during the performance and loudly protested against the "brutal realism" of the treatment of the boy Josephs in the prison scene.

There is a good story told of Tomlins when he was on Jerrold's newspaper. He had an office close by, and employed an office boy to go at eight o'clock to sweep the place out and put everything in order.

One morning at nine Tomlins arrived at his office and could not get in. The boy had the key and had not turned up.

When the boy did arrive he was very sleepy, and explained that he had been up all night. He had had an uncle hanged at the Old Bailey that morning, and he had thought it his duty to go to the funeral—or as near as he could get to it.

Tomlins was sympathetic in his reply. "Quite right, my boy," he said. "Never forget your family duties. But the next time you are going to see a relative hanged, call here first and put the key under the doormat."

Which reminds me that a somewhat similar incident occurred under the roof of the late Mr. Abraham Cecil Fothergill Rowlands, who wrote under the name of Cecil Raleigh.

One morning Raleigh came down to breakfast and was quite justified in grumbling at the way in which it had been

prepared. He sent for the cook to remonstrate with her, and the woman came to him in tears.

"Oh, please, sir," she said, "I hope you'll look over it, but my husband, from whom I'm separated, was hanged this morning, and it rather upset me."

I was in the pit at the Prince of Wales's in Tottenham Court Road when it was opened under the management of Miss Marie Wilton and H. J. Byron with a comedy, *Winning Hazard*, and a burlesque of *La Somnambula*.

The Prince of Wales's, which Tom Robertson and the Bancrofts made the most fashionable theatre in London, was, when I first knew it, called the Queen's, and known as "The Dusthole." There I used to see such old-fashioned dramas as *The Angel of Midnight*, *The Clock on the Stairs*, and *The String of Pearls*, a version of "Sweeny Todd," the Demon Barber of Fleet Street, who, according to tradition, tilted his customers out of the shaving-chair through a trap-door into a cellar, where he pickled them and made them into pork pies.

The invention of the demon barber was at one time widely attributed to George Augustus Sala, but "The String of Pearls," in which Sweeny Todd and his barber's shop in Fleet Street were introduced into the first chapter, first appeared in the *People's Periodical and Family Library*, edited by E. Lloyd, and was published in 1846.

Sala was on Edward Lloyd's staff, but he did not perpetrate "Sweeny Todd." When the play was first produced it was announced as "*Sweeny Todd, the Barber of Fleet Street, or The String of Pearls*, a Drama in three acts founded on the popular work of the same title by Fred Hazleton, Esq., Author of 'Edith the Captive,' 'Charley Wag,' etc."

As this drama can be traced back to the Britannia Theatre in 1846, Sala, in the year in which he was alleged to have written "Sweeny Todd," was only eighteen, so I am afraid that the credit of having invented the immortal barber must be denied to him.

Dear old E. L. Blanchard told me many years ago that he was one of the authors who occasionally supplied The Dusthole with a drama. The price paid was generally ten shillings an act.

I was in the Strand Music Hall on the last night of its



LADY BANCROFT
(MISS MARIE WILTON)

existence, and when John Hollingshead had obtained the money to turn it into the Gaiety I was in the gallery on Practical John's first night.

We were not a kind gallery, and we were not a kind pit, and we did not like the version of *L'Escamoteur* which he called *On the Cards*, and though Madge Robertson and Alfred Wigan played delightfully, there was a good deal of hissing at the fall of the curtain.

John Hollingshead stepped on the stage and held up his hand.

"What do you want?" he said.

"Something better for our money," we shouted back.

"You shall have it directly," replied Practical John—he was not really practical, but he had a good heart, which was much nicer.

The "something better" was a burlesque of *Robert the Devil* by a young author named W. S. Gilbert. It was called "An operatic extravaganza," and in it Nellie Farren began her long and happy connexion with the Gaiety. She played Robert, Emily Fowler was Alice, and Connie Loseby was Raimbault. Joseph Eldred was Gobetto, and Richard Barker—who was afterwards to be flung down the steps of the Opera Comique in the famous *Pinafore* dispute, and to become a great "producer" on both sides of the Atlantic, and to stage *The Merry Duchess*, by Frederic Clay and myself, for Miss Kate Santley at the Royalty—was Bertram.

John Hollingshead was a journalist—he was one of Dickens's young men—and he was always issuing manifestoes.

In the early days of the Gaiety, when Talbot Smith was generally to be seen during the day-time smoking a big cigar at the front entrance, John Hollingshead used to sit in his office at the theatre with his watch on the desk in front of him.

Robert Soutar—Nellie Farren's husband—looked after the stage, and Hollingshead generally had "appointments" somewhere else. That was why he always kept his watch on his writing-table.

I used occasionally to make my way over to the Garrick Theatre in Leman Street, Whitechapel. It was a theatre run on the lines of a gaff, and I saw *Sixteen String Jack* played there

On this occasion the house was packed, and I was told that the only seat vacant was one in a private box for which the charge would be sixpence.

I paid my money and was put into a box which had four seats. The other three were occupied by a black sailor the worse for drink and two ladies whom nothing could have made worse.

The audience was noisy, but there were two or three big burly fellows in uniform who kept order by hitting the disturbers of the piece on the head with a cane.

A story popular at the time gives a very fair idea of the character of the audience at the Garrick in its gaff days.

The proprietor was a man named Richards, who was fairly well known in professional circles. One year Mr. Gye announced that he would open his Italian Opera Season a month earlier than usual.

Soon after the announcement Richards met Gye in the Strand.

"I say," said Richards, "you've done a nice thing for me, opening your opera show next month. It cuts right into my season."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Gye, "how can my Italian Opera Season affect your confounded gaff? Your patrons aren't likely to come to my theatre."

"No," replied Richards, "but they'll be outside it picking pockets."

Apropos of the Garrick, some years afterwards Bill Yardley and his friend and my friend Joe McClean acquired an interest in the Garrick, refurnished and redecorated it, and made it quite a spick-and-span little place.

I was there on the first night that it opened under the direction, I believe, of Miss May Bulmer. The play was a musical one, *A Cruise to China*, and in it there was a young gentleman who had deserted his father's office for the stage. He played a gouty old gentleman and sang a song. The name of the young actor was Herbert Beerbohm Tree.

There is a story told—I dare say it isn't true—that young Tree one day sought an interview with the management and explained that he would like to resign the part as he had a good chance at the Criterion, where Wyndham had offered him a nice little part and five pounds a week.

Sir Herbert won't mind my telling the story. We are old friends. Young Tree made his first success by reciting one of my "Dagonet Ballads" entitled "Told to the Missionary," and he altered the word "bitch" into "dog," for which he was reproached—I think it was in the *Referee*—for mutilating the text of an author in a spirit of false delicacy.

From the age of six to the age of twenty-four I had been a fairly persistent playgoer. My mother took me to the theatre until I was seventeen, and after that I took myself.

It was when I was in my twenty-fifth year that one of my ambitions was suddenly fulfilled. I became a dramatic critic—for a fortnight. My first dramatic criticism was followed by a murder in which the heroine of the play I had criticized was very closely concerned.

It was at my mother's house in Hamilton Terrace that I met the lady who first brought me into journalistic touch with a murder case.

My mother was a member of a number of societies which devoted themselves socially and politically to the welfare of women.

She was a woman of wide sympathies, a humorous speaker, a trained elocutionist, and very popular on the "platform" when the various societies held public or private meetings. She was an enthusiastic advocate of female suffrage.

But nothing delighted her more than to gather her "working friends," as she called them, around her at our house in Hamilton Terrace.

Among our frequent guests were Augusta Webster, the poetess, Karl and Mathilde Blind, Dr. Anna Kingsford, Mrs. Fenwick-Miller—she was Miss Fenwick-Miller then—Emily Faithfull, Ella Dietz, Dr. Zerffi, Professor Plumtree, Samuel Butler, the author of "Erewhon," Frances Power Cobbe, and occasionally Lydia Becker.

Dr. Anna Kingsford was a lovely woman, with classical features and a mass of wonderful golden hair. I think she was the most beautiful "clever" woman I have ever known.

She told me one evening at a dance at my mother's house that she would like above all things to see a rehearsal of a pantomime, so I took her to the dress rehearsal of the Grecian pantomime, and George Conquest kindly gave me a box.

I could see that every one on the stage was struck by the ethereal beauty of my companion. After the rehearsal was over, when I had gone behind to speak to Conquest, he told me that whenever he had looked at the box that evening he felt as if he were entertaining an angel unawares.

And then I told him that he had been, as my friend, Dr. Anna Kingsford, was in a former existence Joan of Arc.

The beautiful doctor was fully convinced of this, and she maintained that she still had visions. She had taken her M.D. degree, but she had many "unmedical" views. She was the wife of a clergyman, but she was a mystic. At times she would speak like an inspired prophetess, and sometimes she would be as frivolous as a Society beauty.

Anna Kingsford died long before her beauty had faded, and to her devoted friends and admirers who were spiritualists she is said to have returned after death, looking as lovely as ever.

It was at a meeting of a society formed to advocate the claims of women that my mother met a lady who wrote under the name of Amelia Lewis. Amelia Lewis was the wife of Dr. Freund, a physician in Finsbury Square. She had a son, John Freund, who, while an undergraduate at Oxford, brought out in London a monthly magazine which was published at a shilling and called the *Dark Blue*.

Amelia Lewis and her son, John Freund, became frequent visitors at our house. They heard of my desire to become a journalist, and John Freund—after interesting my father in the *Dark Blue* and getting him, I believe, to put some money into the affair—said he would give me a chance of learning the business of authorship. He offered to take me into the editorial office of the *Dark Blue*.

I had left the City—I left it four or five times, to go back to it again, before I finally settled down to journalism and the drama—and so my father consented, and in a room over the shop and warehouse of the British and Colonial Publishing Company, at 81a Fleet Street, I commenced my adventures as a Pressman.

So far as I can remember, among the few books that the company published and displayed in the shop window were "The Modern Magdalene," by Amelia Lewis; "The Theatre

in England: Its Shortcomings and Possibilities," by Tom Taylor; "The Coming Cromwell," by an unknown author; and "Gillott and Goosequill," by Henry S. Leigh.

The *Dark Blue*, which John Freund edited between Oxford and London, had a remarkable list of contributors, among whom were John Ruskin, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Dante G. Rossetti, Henry Kingsley, W. S. Gilbert, C. S. Calverley, George Macdonald, Thomas Hughes, M.P., Edmund Yates, Andrew Lang, J. Ashby-Sterry, Sidney Colvin, W. Vernon Harcourt, M.P., Frederick Pollock, William Black, Karl Blind, Joaquin Miller, and Moncure D. Conway.

This was in the year 1872, and the first contribution I was permitted to make to this shilling magazine "established for the promotion of high-class literature" was an article on the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race. I wanted to call it "An Attack of Tiefuss Fever," but Freund thought that would look a little too frivolous between an article by Ruskin and a poem by Swinburne.

It was part of my duty to go over the proofs and compare them carefully with the written manuscript before returning them to the author.

I remember that on one occasion I returned the proof of a poem to Swinburne, and suggested an alteration to one of the lines.

In the first week of my engagement Amelia Lewis brought out a new paper which was to be devoted entirely to the interests of womanhood. The title of the paper was *Woman*.

"You are a playgoer, and you can do the theatre for *Woman*, if you like," said Mrs. Lewis to me one morning as we sat at lunch in a little back office piled up with unsold copies of the *Dark Blue*.

I accepted the offer eagerly, and the next evening, armed with a card on which was written "*Woman*, a Weekly Journal, Dramatic Critic, Mr. Geo. R. Sims," I presented myself at the box-office of the St. James's Theatre, where a series of French plays was then being performed under the direction of M. Félix, and was given a stall—there were plenty to spare.

The play that evening was *Christiane*, a comedy by Gondinet, and the heroine was played by a pretty and sympathetic young actress, Mademoiselle Riel.

I wrote a column article on Mademoiselle Riel's Christiane, and made it what I hoped would be the first of a series entitled "Woman on the French Stage in London."

A week or two after her success as Christiane, Mademoiselle Riel, being out of the bill, went for a week-end to Paris. She left her mother and her cook, a Belgian named Marguerite Dixblancs, and an English housemaid at the pretty little house in Park Lane which had been placed at her disposal by an English nobleman.

When Mademoiselle Riel returned early on Monday morning the housemaid let her in and said, "Oh, Miss Julie, I'm so glad you have come back. Madame has not been home since yesterday, nor has cook."

The house was searched, and in the pantry Madame Riel was found lying dead with a rope round her neck. The Belgian cook who had committed the crime had fled to Paris with money and notes which were missing.

She was eventually arrested in France by Inspector Druscovitch, who was to figure later in the famous Kerr and Benson frauds. She was tried in London and sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life.

Benson, by the by, who was the prime mover in the frauds that brought some of the principal men at Scotland Yard to grief, went to America soon after the *Referee* had been started, and there passed himself off as a member of the *Referee* staff and an intimate friend of "Dagonet."

I got plenty of experience on the *Dark Blue*, but no money, and I wanted some. So I told my father that I would try the City again if he would give me a month's salary in advance. He consented readily, thinking that I was cured of my desire to be an author.

When he told me that, I did not say "Wait and see."

But I thought it.

CHAPTER VI

It was my membership of the Unity Club that opened to me the gates of the City of Prague, the city of which "Jeff" Prowse, the Laureate of Bohemia, sang so lovingly.

There are lines of Prowse's which, though his audience was limited at the time, have never been forgotten, and the veterans of the Old Brigade quote them still with joy.

I remember a line in which Prowse described an ancestor of the present All-Highest Hun who was known as "King Clicquot," and who was at the same time as publicly prayerful as "Holy Willie," the Kaiser's grandfather. Prowse described "King Clicquot" as "problematically pious, but indubitably drunk."

In "The City of Prague," from which I quote a verse, Prowse sums up the old Bohemia in which I found myself a stranger and a pilgrim nearly half a century ago :

*I dwelt in a city enchanted,
And lonely indeed was my lot ;
Two guineas a week, all I wanted,
Was certainly all that I got :
Well, somehow I found it was plenty,
Perhaps you may find it the same,
If—if you are just five-and-twenty,
With industry, hope, and an aim.
Though the latitude's rather uncertain,
And the longitude also is vague,
The persons I pity who know not the city :
The beautiful City of Prague.*

Two guineas a week was the sum upon which many a good fellow managed to know the joy of life, and some of them, to all outward appearances, got the joy for less.

Fleet Street, before it became the highway of newspaperdom,

was a street of taverns, and tavern life formed a considerable portion of the life of Bohemia when I first landed on its shores. That Bohemia had shores let Shakespeare bear witness—"Scene: Bohemia, a desert country near the sea."

Our Bohemia was no desert country, but it lay on the shores of a sea, the sea of unrest, picturesque unrest, of movement and colour, of song and laughter, often, alas, of those who made haste to laugh lest they should weep.

As I write there come to me memories of Mortimer Collins, the fine old Bohemian poet who, when invited to the Mansion House to a banquet in honour of the representatives of art and literature, refused to put on evening dress, and sat down among the white shirt-fronts in a black velvet jacket and waistcoat and fancy pattern trousers; Tom Purnell, "Q" of the *Athenæum*; W. G. Wills, the King of Bohemia; dear old E. L. Blanchard, the gentlest Bohemian of them all; Henry S. Leigh, the Caroller of Cockayne; John Augustus O'Shea, the "Gineral"; William Brunton, the artist; the three brilliant brothers, William, Wallis, and Joe McKay; Savile Clarke, Tom Jerrold, Fatty Coleman, and handsome Tom Hood, for whom everybody was willing to do anything for his father's sake, but who was too genial and easy-going to do very much for himself.

My first interview with him when he was the editor of *Fun* was at Spiers and Pond's bar in Ludgate Hill Station, the great meeting-place of the "literati" of the locality. And their beverage was as often a brandy hot or a gin cold. But Tom Hood was fairly faithful to green Chartreuse.

Of the picturesque Bohemian W. G. Wills I shall have something to say when I meet him a little later on in Theatreland. I did not know him when I first joined the Unity, but the men I did know were many of them quite remarkable characters.

There was an actor, a low comedian, whom I will call "Billy W.," who was generally to be found asleep on the club sofa. He had not had an engagement for over twelve months, and I knew afterwards that sometimes for a whole week he had not a copper in his pocket.

He had a room near Covent Garden, and the two old ladies, sisters, who kept the house were very sympathetic. They not

only never pressed him for the rent, but every morning they took a cup of tea and a slice of bread and butter to his bedside.

One day somebody who had borrowed half a crown from Billy three years previously met him in the Strand and paid the debt. Billy rushed off at once and spent the whole half-crown in what to him was a Gargantuan repast. Then he strolled out into the street.

Suddenly some one touched him on the shoulder. He turned round and found himself face to face with John Oxenford, the amiable critic of the *Times*, who was always to be seen on a first night in a private box with Mr. Murphy on one side of him and Mr. Herbert on the other.

"Hallo, Billy!" said Oxenford, "I'm going to Carr's. Come and have some dinner with me."

I met Billy that evening, and he was almost in tears as he told me the story.

"Fancy!" he said; "it's the first time anybody's asked me to have a dinner for twelve months, and I'd spent the only half-crown I'd seen for a year in buying one!"

Poor Billy W. got one or two brief engagements, but he brought bad luck, and began to be looked upon as a sort of Jonah. Eventually, I believe, he left the profession and joined his brother, who was in the undertaking business.

There was plenty of the hunger pain in Fleet Street in my youth, but the men who suffered its pangs did not talk about it. Any one would stand you a drink, but nobody would ask you to eat.

A Bohemian of a different type from Billy W. was a Scotsman, a brilliant fellow who was at one time the editor of a well-known Sunday paper, and my chief. He was a fine scholar and a first-class journalist.

There was nothing very gay or bright about his Bohemianism, but he used to sit among us and drink steadily.

One day in the absence of the dramatic critic of the paper through illness, the editor took the stall that had been sent for a West End theatre, and went to criticize the performance himself.

It was an opéra bouffe, and in it a very handsome young woman played a small part.

The editor admired her very much. She had not many

lines to speak, but he gave her nearly as many lines in his notice, and soon afterwards made her acquaintance. He had fallen violently in love with her, but she laughed at him. She had other views.

As he could not get the girl he became unhappy and drank to drown his grief. Presently he became impossible, and disappeared from Fleet Street.

Some years afterwards I had a letter from my former editor. He wrote me from the Strand workhouse to tell me that though he had come to the last refuge of the destitute the disaster had been a blessing in disguise, for in the workhouse he had met an old flame. The beautiful actress with whom he had been in love had come to the workhouse too. As a matter of fact, the same cause had brought them both to the paupers' hotel.

While in the workhouse the lady wrote to several of her old admirers, and one of them sent her a ten-pound note. On the strength of that both the ex-editor and the ex-stage beauty discharged themselves, got a special licence and were married.

They drank the balance of the money away in a few days, and at the end of their brief honeymoon returned penniless to the workhouse. The husband died there. The widow is still writing from the workhouse to "old admirers."

But there is a fairer side to the Bohemia of my youth, and I gladly turn to it.

Very early in my Fleet Street days I made the acquaintance of two of the famous journalists of the period, George Augustus Sala and Archibald Forbes.

Forbes was not seen much in Bohemia. He was the great war correspondent of the day, and was generally "somewhere at the front." But years afterwards he became my friend and close neighbour in Regent's Park.

We were on the best of terms, and very often the old war correspondent would come in and smoke a pipe with me and fight his battles over again.

I should not call Forbes a Bohemian. He was always too much of a soldier to drop into our happy-go-lucky ways, but Sala was a Bohemian to the tips of his finger-nails. I have told the story of his early experiences as an artist and of his first editorship, but I heard him once, at a dinner given to a

famous publisher of Philadelphia, tell the company that he could look back to the time when, as a youth, he had slept more than one night in Covent Garden Market with a sack of potatoes for a pillow. And that was in the days when Covent Garden was known as "Mud Salad Market," and lived up to its reputation.

But he came through, and when I first met him he was one of the "lions" of the *Daily Telegraph*, not quite a young "lion," but with all his teeth sound, and with a roar that was as loud as any in the great Peterborough Court Menagerie.

Sala was a *bon vivant* and a *gourmet*. He had as practical a knowledge of cookery as the elder Dumas, and a perfect sense of the poetry of the palate.

He was the most fastidious Bohemian in the matter of food that I ever knew.

On the last occasion I met him abroad it was at Nice. I went into a restaurant to lunch, and found Sala sitting at a table in a corner of the room. He was having an altercation with the waiter with regard to the "infamous price" he had been charged for some oysters. In perfect French he told the waiter to take his compliments to the proprietor and inform him that he was a brigand.

Directly Sala saw me he rose, came towards me, slipped his arm in mine and said to the astonished waiter, "This gentleman is a friend of mine, and I shall not permit you to rob him as you have robbed me." Then, heedless of my gentle expostulations, he led me out of the restaurant.

But Sala, although he objected to extortionate charges in foreign restaurants, was a *viveur* in every sense of the word.

He took his liquor with discretion in the matter of its quality and valour in the matter of its quantity. He was a seasoned worshipper of the vine-wreathed god, but occasionally towards the small hours of the morning his powers of resistance to the influence of the insidious nectar would weaken.

I remember a story he told me. On one occasion he had come back from Cremorne about three in the morning and had looked in at the *Daily Telegraph* office "on business."

When he came out again to continue the night's amusement he hailed a four-wheeled cab and said, "Barnes's," which was

a well-known West End rendezvous for night-birds at that time. He got into the cab and fell asleep.

He remembered nothing more until he was shaken up by the cabman, who was standing at the open door and shouting at him.

"What part of Barnes do you want to go to, guv'nor?" said the cabman. "This is the Common."

Sala, alike in the days when he dined and wineed generously and in the days when he frequently did not dine at all, wrote a marvellous hand. It was of the old "copper-plate" kind, and his copy was a delight to the printers. From their point of view it was ideal, and that they were justified in that view will be seen from the following specimen.

Cloudy memories of an old Passport.

One day in Denmark

A tramp through the streets of Copenhagen on a raw spring morning is not the most interesting promenade in the world. Moreover it was Sunday, and as Lutheran Sunday in high latitudes is more remarkable than agreeable, it is a cross between the belle, punning, rumbling, red-hot poker Sabbath, as it is observed in Holland, and, to a modified extent, in England, and the gay and festive continental *Dimanche*, or *Domenica*—call it what you will. The Protestant Religion as understood by Danish and Swedish Lutherans (the only Lutherans are

Another friend of mine in the early days—and late nights—was Herman Merivale. Herman Merivale was a fine dramatist, and wrote some excellent poetry and one good novel.

I never met a man more energetic in argument or louder in declamation during private conversation. His vigorous gestures were sometimes as alarming as his vociferation.

I remember meeting him one night at the old Ship at Brighton just about midnight, and he insisted upon my going out for a walk with him, as he wanted air.

We strolled along the front in the moonlight, and presently the discussion turned upon opera singers.

Merivale had just come back from Italy, and he was enthusiastic about—I think it was—Tamagno.

Gradually he worked himself up into a frenzy of enthusiasm. He had a big stick with him which he brandished wildly in the air while he declaimed against every one who did not believe that Tamagno was the greatest singer on earth.

Presently we found ourselves down on the beach near the private "semi-residential" arches.

Fancying, I suppose, that he was not thoroughly impressing me with the merits of Tamagno, he suddenly gripped me by the shoulder, pushed me against the wall, and began to rave at me, emphasizing his arguments about every five seconds with a terrific bang of his stick upon the stonework.

Eventually I found myself dodging my head to and fro to escape the practical punctuation of Merivale's sentences.

On one occasion Merivale—so the story goes—went to read a play to Mrs. Langtry at her private residence. He had been invited to lunch. It was an elaborate lunch, and the dessert service was exquisite.

With the appearance of the coffee Merivale began to tell Mrs. Langtry the synopsis of the play which he wanted her to produce as there was a part in it which would suit her. He became excited, and stood up at the table in order to give freer play to his dramatic gestures.

When he reached the situation in the first act the gesture was not only dramatic but so sweeping that off went half the dessert service.

"That," said Merivale, "is the first act. I will now give you the big situation in the second."

When Merivale reached the situation of the second act his gesture was more sweeping than ever. Off went the rest of the service.

"Now," said Merivale, utterly heedless of the havoc he had caused, "I will give you the situation of the third act.

Off went Mrs. Langtry.

Sydney Grundy was coming to see me one day at Brighton, and I went to the station. There was no Grundy, but I met Merivale getting out of the train.

"Where's Grundy?" I asked.

"Oh," replied Merivale, "I got into the carriage with him at Victoria. But he got out at Redhill, and didn't come back again."

Two hours later Grundy arrived.

Then he explained. As soon as the train left Victoria, Merivale, who had had a quarrel with Wilson Barrett over a

play, had begun to give Grundy his opinion of Barrett's behaviour.

As usual, he had his thick stick with him, and he began to brandish it and strike the sides of the carriage with it. Grundy and he were alone in the compartment, and as Merivale became more and more violent, so he became less and less accurate in his aim, and Grundy found himself wondering whether he had not better secure safety under the seat.

When the train stopped at Redhill he saw his chance and got out.

Merivale was always my good friend, and apart from his eccentricities of argument a charming man. But I did not meet Herman Merivale until after my first play, *Crutch and Toothpick*, had been produced, and the story of my dramatic debut is a story of the old Bohemian Club in Holywell Street.

CHAPTER VII

ONE night there came into the Unity Club a shortish, thick-set, good-looking young man with keen grey eyes and features that suggested a masterful disposition. He had a black bag with him, and he was brought in to have a drink by my friend John Thomson, the dramatic critic of the *Weekly Dispatch*.

Thomson introduced me to his guest and I learned that his name was Henry Sampson, that he was writing the sporting article in the *Weekly Dispatch* under the pen-name of "Pen-dragon," that he was Tom Hood's right-hand on *Fun*, and that he had had practical experience of most of the sport that he wrote about. He was a fine athlete, had been in the old days a redoubtable sprinter, and was well skilled in what it was the custom in those days to call "the noble art of self-defence."

We talked together that evening until past midnight, and I suppose I made a favourable impression, for soon afterwards when Tom Hood fell ill and Sampson was conducting the paper in his absence he invited me to call upon him.

I went into the little back office in Fleet Street and there Sampson told me that I might if I liked do a bit of verse and a few paragraphs and send them in.

I sent in the verse and the pars. They were printed in *Fun*, and on the following Thursday by the editor's instructions I stood in the front office at the cashier's desk and waited while that useful official fumbled in a drawer and presently drew out a little white packet on which my name was written. I unfolded the packet and found in it a sovereign and three shillings, the "honorarium" for my contribution.

The pay for every literary contribution to the paper was at the rate of one pound per column, and fractions of a column were paid for pro rata.

As your contributions might be scattered all over the paper they were measured up with a piece of string, which the cashier applied to your verse or paragraph and then drew it through his fingers and measured up your next "bit."

After that I contributed regularly for some weeks to *Fun*, and then Sampson told me that I should have to stand down for a time, as W. S. Gilbert, an old contributor, had suddenly weighed in with "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern," a burlesque drama, which might run for two or three weeks, and during that period there would be no room for me.

But as soon as "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern" had run its course I went back on to *Fun*, and worked on it until the death of Tom Hood. Sampson, at Tom Hood's request, was given the editorship, and I became regularly attached to the staff—and to my chief.

Henry Sampson was my editor and kindly comrade to the end of his life. He was an implacable enemy, but as loyal a friend as ever man had.

Here are the last lines Tom Hood ever wrote. They were written to the Brothers Dalziel from his deathbed:

"MY DEAR SIR,—To the best of my ability, and to the utmost of my power, I have served you loyally and honestly while strength remained. If I have failed it has not been wilfully, and when we have differed in opinion I have only done what I have believed it right to do, or assert beyond mere matter of expediency.

"Sampson has long co-operated with me, and now so well understands the working of the paper that it has been of the greatest comfort and use to me to have, for the first time in my life, some one on whom I could entirely rely when I was disabled.

"A more disinterested and faithful friend man never had, and I am sure if you transfer the bauble from my hands to his you will have secured fidelity and ability of no usual order, loyalty and discretion, zeal and determination. It is my dying wish that he might be my successor on *Fun*. Of course I only express this as simply a wish of yours always,
"TOM HOOD."

Gilbert, who temporarily put me "out of work," came to

Fun through the rejection by *Punch* of his famous ballad, "The Yarn of the *Nancy Bell*." The editor of *Punch* thought it was too cannibalistic; the editor of *Fun* did not share his opinion, and so it appeared in *Fun*, and for some time after that Gilbert contributed to the penny instead of the threepenny periodical.

At the time I went on to *Fun* I was still in the City. I was getting much too good a salary in my father's office to resign it for what I had found by experience was a very uncertain income.

I was having a guinea a week on the *Dispatch*, and averaging two pounds a week on *Fun*, but in spite of my Bohemianism I had extravagant ideas and heavy debts, and the three pounds did not suffice to keep me from anxiety.

So at that time I was in the City from ten o'clock in the morning until one, when I had an hour and a half for lunch. The luncheon hour I nearly always devoted to paying visits to my editors.

I got back to the City generally about half-past two. I remained there until six—there were certain things I was bound to attend to, as I was in the shipping department and had to write letters and catch mails—and at six o'clock I left the City and went home.

I was bound to sacrifice an hour for dinner as I rarely had any lunch, but after dinner I went up to my room and worked steadily till half-past ten or eleven. Then I went to the Unity Club and stayed there till three or four in the morning.

Then I went home to bed, and I had generally had enough sleep when eight o'clock came.

At any rate, I was never late for business, and I do not think that twice in my life I have been late at either a business appointment or a pleasure appointment. My punctuality in the matter of keeping appointments has caused me to waste an enormous amount of time, as the other people have so frequently failed to be there until long after the agreed hour.

And now about *Fun* itself. A good many years after I had left it I spent a day at Broadmoor, and after lunching with the medical officers, who were my friends, I was introduced to several of the patients.

Among the gentlemen I met in the club lounge of the institution was Mr. Roderick Maclean. He was playing

whist—for counters, of course—with some fellow-patients at a table. One of them presently had had enough, and I was invited to sit down and make the fourth.

Maclean caught at my name when I was introduced, and at once claimed me as a brother journalist.

He was the Roderick Maclean who shot at Queen Victoria at Windsor in March 1882, and was found to be insane and sent to Broadmoor.

During the game he said to me, "You were on *Fun*, weren't you?"

I said, "Oh, yes."

"Ah," he replied, "that was my father's paper. My father had a big looking-glass shop in Fleet Street. It was called the Commercial Plate Glass Company, and at the back of that shop was an office which he devoted to the staff of *Fun*, of which he was the proprietor. I have often seen George Augustus Sala and Frank Burnand and Tom Hood there. I am writing the story of my life. I will send it to you."

Some time afterwards I received Roderick Maclean's "story of his life," as written by himself at Broadmoor, and from this I will venture to make an extract or two as they bear directly on the story of the paper on which I made my debut as a hired humorist.

Some two months after the adventurous afternoon I had spent at Broadmoor Criminal Asylum with a number of pleasant gentlemen the majority of whom had committed the offence which, had they been considered responsible for their action, would have brought them to the gallows, I received the promised manuscript.

It bore the title of "Yestern ; or The Story of My Life and Reminiscences, by Roderick Edward Maclean," and the motto which the author of "Yestern" had placed upon his title-page was "Veni, vidi, vici."

This motto as an epitome of his career was misleading. Roderick Maclean certainly came and saw, but he failed to conquer even the insane vanity which led him to hang about Windsor until he saw Queen Victoria drive by in an open carriage and then to discharge a loaded revolver at Her Majesty because she had declined, through Lady Marlborough, to accept the dedication of Roderick Maclean's poetry.

"Yestern" was interesting as showing the frame of mind in which the unfortunate author still remained.

There were pages of description of his father's "country estate." This was described in glowing detail never equalled even by the immortal Robins.

There were references to the fair and noble dames who had cast tender glances at him from their "sumptuous equipages" as he sauntered in the Park at the hour of fashion. This was the only possible justification I could find in the autobiography for the "vici."

Describing life in his father's residence in Chapel Place, Oxford Street, he said: "Chapel Place was the rendezvous of many friends, literary, artistic, and independent, many of whom being society's moths and dinner hunters, others second-rate foreign noblemen. The scene being a brilliant one when the chandeliers were lit, and the assembly a happy company, the majority being congenial people, though there were some phlegmatic old fogies whose mordacious remarks threw a shade over the lustre of the prevailing hilarity, a sipient way inculcating disgust and engendering sarcasm."

In the course of his meanderings the author tells in a fashion the beginning of *Fun*, and so I give it verbatim.

"My father was the proprietor of that well-known periodical *Fun*, which he purchased from my brother and a printer, who wanted it more for a hobby than a gigantic speculative enterprise; comparatively it was unknown, but by perseverance and advertising it became a popular periodical. It was eventually purchased by Tom Hood. It was a novel venture, productive of an agreeable associationship with leading literary men. There were Arthur Sketchley, the author of 'Mrs. Brown,' George A. Sala, the remarkable author regarding whom it is said that he approached the zenith of Shakespeare's genius, W. S. Gilbert, the learned burlesque writer, Mr. F. C. Burnand, a good motto for whom is 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush'—original this, Matt Morgan, the original delineator of scenes at Ramsgate and kindred watering-places, and Mr. J., the versatile Tailor of the Midlands, who wrote a scathing satire on the much-maligned Napoleon III."

It is perfectly true that the original office of *Fun* was on the

premises of the Commercial Plate Glass Company. When it was there H. J. Byron was the editor, and F. C. Burnand, the future editor of *Punch*, Clement Scott, Tom Robertson the dramatist, and W. S. Gilbert were on the staff.

Sir Frank Burnand told me some time ago that it was to Maclean's shop in Fleet Street that he used to go to draw the money for his contributions, and one day while in the shop he read the manuscript of "Mokeanna" to Maclean.

Maclean refused it. He did not think it was the sort of stuff the public wanted.

Burnand eventually took "Mokeanna" to the editor of *Punch*, who accepted it. It was an enormous success, and during its progress in the pages of *Punch* it was illustrated by Sir John Gilbert, Hablot K. Brown, Charles Keene, Du Maurier, and Millais.

My first journalistic ambition—it was an ambition of my schooldays—was to be on *Fun*. That ambition was gratified. Later on a greater opportunity came to me. From the editor of *Punch* I received the following letter :

"MY DEAR SIR,—I think 'Mustard and Cress' is yours, is it not? But be that as it may, I should like you to hit on something for *Punch*. I never ask a man to repeat himself, so I won't suggest 'something like M. and C.' But I am sure that without looking very far you can find objects well worthy of the sharpest satire and also of broadly humorous treatment.

"Yours truly,

"F. C. BURNAND."

For some reason, what it was I only dimly remember now, I let the golden opportunity of being a member of the *Punch* staff pass. It is one of the many incidents in my working life that I look back upon with regret.

Maclean was well known in Fleet Street as the proprietor of a comic paper, and more than one Bohemian brother in need of a little cash would "dash off" some verse or a humorous skit in an adjacent coffee-house, and offer it before the ink was dry for "a bit of ready" to the proprietor of the looking-glass shop.

In 1865 Mr. Edward Wylam had become the proprietor.

He became interested in a famous dog-biscuit firm and wanted to sell *Fun*. Tom Hood at that time was the editor.

He took the proposal to the Brothers Dalziel, who gave six thousand pounds for the copyright, and retained Tom Hood as the editor of the paper, a position he held till his death in 1874.

After Hood's death I joined the staff under Sampson's editorship, and remained with him until he started the *Referee* in 1877, and then we left *Fun* together.

The Brothers Dalziel sent me a kindly letter saying how much they regretted the severance of our pleasant connexion.

The brothers were two of the most amiable of men, well known and well loved in the literary and artistic world.

They only put their foot down once, and that was when I wrote some verses heralding the approaching appearance of the new Sunday paper, the *Referee*. The Dalziels nipped the ingenious free advertisement in the bud and in the proof sheets, and wrote Sampson a letter in which they said, "Sims's verses would doubtless be an excellent advertisement for your new venture, but we would remind you that the *Referee* is the property of yourself and Mr. Ashton Dilke, while *Fun* is the property of yours sincerely, the Brothers Dalziel."

The only other occasion on which the dear old brothers remonstrated with Sampson was when the reports of a glove fight at Sadler's Wells, which had been broken up by the police, came out in the papers, and it was stated in one of them that the referee on this dreadful occasion was Mr. Henry Sampson, the editor of *Fun*.

Of that memorable fight—it was between Jim Goode and Micky Rees, and Goode fought twenty rounds after his left arm had become useless—I shall deal in my reminiscences of the prize-ring as I knew it.

It was on this occasion that Jim Goode's father, who was beaming with pride at the prowess of his progeny, gave me his card. It had the Royal arms upon it, and described the owner as "Poodle trimmer to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales."

Boxing in those days was not the aristocratic entertainment that it is to-day. The spectators were not in full evening dress. Many of them did not even trouble to complete the morning dress, and came collarless to the rendezvous.

The Brothers Dalziel were patrons of art, but they did not think that the noble art was one with which their editor should be publicly associated.

I do not think that while he retained the editorship of *Fun* Sampson ever refereed a glove fight again. He, like myself, had a genuine affection for the brothers, and was anxious to do nothing that would hurt their susceptibilities.

But by 1878 the *Referee* had become so successful that Sampson bade the little back office of *Fun* in Fleet Street—the little office filled with hallowed memories—a polite good day, and I went with him.

I did not know then that the son of the first proprietor was whiling away his time at Broadmoor until it should please the Fates to bring me to his side there at the whist table, or that it was in the famous criminal lunatic asylum that I was to learn the origin of the first intentionally comic paper with which I had had the honour of being associated.

I was on *Fun* for two or three years, and I was writing a regular column in the *Weekly Dispatch*, which Mr. Ashton Dilke, a younger brother of Sir Charles Dilke, and M.P. for Newcastle, had purchased. But I was still in the City in the daytime and still at the Unity Club in the night-time.

All my brother Bohemians in the newspaper world and the theatrical world knew that I was in the City, and a good many of them used to come to the office occasionally and have a chat with me about little schemes that we had in hand or ideas that we had in our heads.

John Thomson used to come frequently, and Henry Sampson occasionally. E. J. Odell astonished the office staff one day by calling to inquire in his characteristically humorous manner “if his play was ready, as if it was he would take it with him.”

I had done an adaptation of *Le Centenaire* for him, and this was produced at a matinée at the Olympic in June 1874, without any author's name appearing in connexion with it.

This was my first venture in the regular theatre, but it was not till 1879 that I got my chance.

My first play to go regularly into the evening bills was the three-act comedy, *Crutch and Toothpick*.

Edgar Bruce had taken the Royalty, and it opened under his management with my play on Easter Monday, 1879.

The commission to write the play arose through my being a member of the Unity Club. Charles Wyndham had bought the rights of a French play, and he thought it would suit Bruce for his opening season.

He asked H. B. Farnie to do the adaptation. Farnie was busy, and suggested to Wyndham that he should let me do it.

I had met Wyndham previously, and had been invited to call upon him at an hotel in Arundel Street, Strand, and there I had interviewed him while he was packing his portmanteau in a hurry to catch a train. In those days Wyndham was always in a hurry, and generally had a train to catch.

He asked me to write two new characters into W. S. Gilbert's *Happy Land*, the touring rights of which he had purchased.

How the act of vandalism which I committed when I mutilated the great humorist's satire escaped Gilbert's attention I have never understood. At any rate, Wyndham said my work was good, and presented me as a token of the sincerity of his criticism with a cheque for three pounds.

That was the most so far that I had ever received for a play. For *Le Centenaire* I got nothing.

The next thing I did after *Le Centenaire* was to rewrite *The Field of the Cloth of Gold* with "new and original" songs for the Swanboroughs at the Strand Theatre. My new version, with "Mons" Marius and Angelina Claude in it, was a great success, and when it had run for some considerable time Arthur Swanborough asked me to come across to the Strand Theatre, and in his private office made a charming speech, and on behalf of his mother, dear old Mrs. Swanborough, whom H. J. Byron had foisted upon the theatrical world as the Mrs. Malaprop of her day, presented me with a guinea set of gold studs.

Wyndham gave me the French play to do, and promised me £50 on handing in the manuscript, and £1 a performance until I had received £150, after which there was to be no further payment.

The play was produced at the Royalty on Easter Monday, 1879, and was an instantaneous success. Edgar Bruce played to perfection the hero, a dude of the period, with a

crutch stick in his hand and a toothpick between his teeth, but the great successes of the evening were made by a clever young comedian and a charming young comedienne. The comedian was Mr. W. S. Penley and the comedienne was Miss Lottie Venne.

It was during the run of *Crutch* that an accident happened which took Edgar Bruce out of the bill for a time.

One night he came to the theatre suffering with a bad nervous headache. My friend Claude Carton was then playing another part and understudying Bruce. He sympathetically suggested to Bruce that a simple remedy might help him, sal volatile and red lavender.

Gus Harris, at that time the Royalty stage manager, was standing by and rushed off to the nearest chemist, and without waiting to be told that the proper dose was a teaspoonful of the stuff in a wineglass of water, dashed at Bruce and began to pour the raw sal volatile down his throat.

Luckily, Bruce only swallowed a comparatively small quantity, but as it was it took the skin off his mouth and throat and made him feel terribly bad. He went out of the bill for more than four months, during which period Claude Carton played Guy Devereux.

Crutch on the first night was followed by a musical play, *The Zoo*, by B. C. Stephenson and Arthur Sullivan.

When the curtain had fallen on the comedy Sullivan came behind, shook me warmly by the hand, and thanked me for having put the audience in such a good humour for *The Zoo*.

The Zoo was not a great success, and soon after a burlesque called *Venus*, by Edward Rose and Augustus Harris, was substituted for it, and this was one of the first pieces in which the star flapper appeared.

Harris at the time was negotiating for the lease of Drury Lane.

After the show we used to go to Kettner's and have a modest supper there in the little side room.

Gus Harris—he was always Gus to us—told me one night at Kettner's that if he got the Lane he was going to produce a play which he and Henry Pettitt and Paul Meritt had constructed between them. It was called *The World*.

When Gus Harris told me about the play that he had in

his head I told him about the play that I had already constructed and partly written.

The play that I told him about was *The Lights o' London*.

Bruce at the same time told me that he had a great idea of getting the Prince of Wales's Theatre.

One night Gus came to Bruce on the stage of the Royalty and said, "I'm going to leave you, dear boy. I've taken a theatre."

"Taken a theatre!" exclaimed Bruce. "Why, you haven't a pound in your pocket."

"Quite right," replied Gus, with a grin, "but I've got something in my pocket better than a pound. I've got the lease of Drury Lane." And he drew the document forth and flourished it in the face of his astonished manager.

That night I met Gus after the theatre, and we walked West together. I, of course, congratulated him on having Drury Lane. "But," I said, "it's an awful responsibility, my boy. Look at the managers the Lane has ruined. It may ruin you."

"It can't," said Gus, chuckling. "I've got nothing to lose."

Both Bruce and Harris had brought their plans off, and *The Lights o' London* were still glimmering in the horizon. But they were soon to blaze out, and it came about in this way.

Alfred Hemming, the head of the Hemming and Walton combination, bought the provincial rights of *Crutch*. Let me say at once that Wyndham was kinder to me than his contract, and allowed me to stand in in the provincial rights.

Hemming had a pantomime engagement to fulfil at the Grand Theatre, Leeds. He asked me to go down and see himself and the Walton Family perform in the pantomime.

I went to Leeds, saw the pantomime, and in the theatre I met Wilson Barrett.

CHAPTER VIII

LONG before Fate led me to Leeds and flung Wilson Barrett across my pilgrim path I had at various times endeavoured to make managers acquainted with the fact that I had a drama to dispose of.

A professional friend, into whose sympathetic ear I poured my despair, advised me to take the play to Morris Abrahams at the Pavilion, and told me that he would always give fifty pounds for a good drama.

I shook my head at the proposal. I was ambitious, and I wanted the West End.

I told James Fernandez about it, and he said he would get the Gattis to hear it for the Adelphi if I would write them a letter to bring the subject under their notice.

I wrote the brothers, whom I had met once or twice casually at the Adelaide Gallery, and I wrote in my best handwriting—there were no typewriters then—and in reply I received an amiable letter from the Adelphi, written on behalf of the brothers Gatti by Mr. Charles Jecks, who was then the business manager.

Messrs. Gatti thanked me for my offer, but all their arrangements were made for some time to come.

They were producing a play called *The Crimson Cross*, by Clement Scott and E. Manuel.

I read the play to the beautiful Helen Barry, of *Babil and Bijou* fame, but she did not think there was a part in it to suit her.

Then I tried Walter Gooch, who at that time had the Princess's. I had met Gooch when he was running the Metropolitan Music Hall, and I got Harry Jackson, a favourite comedian, famous for his comic jokes, and at that time Gooch's "dramatic adviser," to talk to him about my play,

and see if he could not induce the manager of the Princess's to hear it.

Walter Gooch was an amiable and kind-hearted little man, but with no "sense of the theatre." He left a good deal at that time to the judgment of Harry Jackson.

Gooch said he would hear the play, and invited me to dine with him one winter evening at his house in St. Andrew's Place, Regent's Park.

The dinner I shall always remember because we were waited on by a small page-boy in brilliant uniform. He handed each dish first to Gooch, who before raising the cover said, "What have we here?" When coffee and cigar time came I began to tell my host about the play, which I thought would suit the Princess's very well indeed.

But just as I was getting him interested the wretched page-boy, who had been to the door to take in some letters, came in with the announcement that it was snowing heavily, and all the interest in my play that the manager of the Princess's had hitherto displayed vanished.

"Snow!" he exclaimed. "That's a nice thing! It'll ruin business at the theatre. I wonder what we've got in to-night? I shall have to get down there soon."

I took in the situation at once. I left off talking about my play, and walked with Gooch as far as the Princess's.

On the way he told me that he would think about the play. He rather liked the idea—I had told him hardly anything about it—but he was afraid that all his arrangements were complete, and he was committed to his next production.

It was a snowy night in January 1881 when Gooch and I walked to the theatre together. Edwin Booth was then starring at the Princess's with a round of Shakespearean characters, but Gooch had arranged to follow Shakespeare with a play by Mr. Richard Lee, formerly the dramatic critic of the *Morning Advertiser*. This was the production to which he was committed.

Mr. Richard Lee had in 1872 written a play for Mrs. Scott Siddons called *Ordeal by Touch*, and he had announced that having determined to become a dramatist he had resigned his position as dramatic critic, as he did not consider it right for

a dramatist to sit in judgment on the playwrights with whom he was competing for public favour.

Mr. Lee's play at the Princess's was called *Branded*. It was produced on April 2, 1881. It was a sensational drama, and was principally noteworthy for the number of horses which took part in it and whose unexpected antics convulsed the audience during what were intended to be the most thrilling parts of the play.

Branded was a complete fiasco, and a play by Watts Phillips, *Camilla's Husband*, was quickly put up, but on May 28 the benefit of Mr. Harry Jackson, the stage manager, and "positively the last night of the season" was announced. And that was the end of Walter Gooch's reign at the Princess's.

When the theatre opened again it was in June under the management of Mr. Wilson Barrett, and on September 2 Wilson Barrett produced *The Lights o' London*, the play which Walter Gooch had rejected because he had fixed his hopes on *Branded*.

Some years afterwards I wrote with Clement Scott a play for Mrs. Gooch—the popular Fanny Leslie—and it was produced at the Strand.

It was in this play that Lewis Waller made his first London success. I was very glad to see him in the company, for his beautiful voice had attracted my attention some time previously when he was playing a small part at Toole's Theatre, and I had prophesied a great future for him.

Waller, whose wife, Miss Florence West—a sister of the lady who afterwards became Mrs. Clement Scott—was playing the heroine, came to me after the dress rehearsal and said, "I hope I shall be all right. I am very anxious indeed to get my footing here."

The play was *Jack-in-the-Box*, which after a provincial tour was produced, in February 1887, at the Strand Theatre.

The ultimate fate of poor Walter Gooch was for a long time a mystery. He suffered terribly from an internal complaint. He lost his energy and in many ways things went wrong with him. The Princess's, after he had rebuilt it, collapsed so far as a portion of it was concerned, and that helped to ruin him. He had borrowed a considerable sum on the lease of

the Princess's Theatre, but the money went and he became very hard up indeed.

Then his old haunts knew him no more, but a good many people for various reasons were anxious to know what had become of him. Inquiries were made, but no trace of him could be discovered.

Some time after Walter Gooch's disappearance from London life a man poorly clad and evidently dying was picked up in the streets of New York. He was found to be unconscious, was taken to a hospital, and there he died.

When his clothes were searched in order to discover some trace of his identity, nothing was found but a bunch of keys. He was buried as unknown, and the keys were put away in a box in the office of an official whose duty it was to look after the unclaimed property of deceased persons.

The bunch of keys lay in the box for some years. One day a new clerk was appointed in one of the departments of the office, and this clerk was an Englishman.

He took charge of the box, and, in going over the contents, he found the keys. He took them up and looked at them, and made inquiry as to why the body upon which they had been found was described as that of a man unknown. He pointed out that it was quite easy to ascertain to whom the keys belonged, as one of them was a Chubb and numbered.

"If you write to England," he said, "to Messrs. Chubb, and give the number of this key, they will be able to search their books and tell you who this man was."

The letter was written, and the reply received was that the key had been made for Mr. Walter Gooch, the lessee of the Princess's Theatre in Oxford Street, London, and that it was the key of a black box which had been supplied at the same time for his use at the theatre.

The mystery of the fate of Walter Gooch, some time lessee and manager of the Princess's Theatre, was solved at last.

At least I and many other old friends of the former lessee of the Princess's thought so, but it appears to be still a mystery.

Some time after I had first published the story of the keys a lady wrote me that she had had as a lodger in 1889 till 1893 a gentleman named Walter Gooch, who used to show her a

silver cigar-case on which was an inscription to the effect that it had been presented to him by Geo. R. Sims.

This Walter Gooch, she told me, went in '96 to his mother's house in Maida Vale, and there he died. I have made inquiry at Somerset House, but have failed to find any certificate of his death in London, and so I am inclined to believe that the man who was found dead in New York, with the keys of Walter Gooch in his possession, was Walter Gooch himself.

CHAPTER IX

BETWEEN the production of *Crutch and Toothpick* at the Royalty and the journey to Leeds which was to bring me into professional relationship with Wilson Barrett, a great many things had happened.

For one thing I had made the acquaintance of Mr. Louis Diehl, the composer.

I had written some verses and published them—I forget where—and Diehl, always on the look-out for words, had read them and thought he would like to set them to music.

As I am frequently asked for a copy of the verses and cannot find them in any of my published volumes, I give them here.

THE LIGHTS OF LONDON TOWN

*The way was long and weary,
But gallantly they strode,
A country lad and lassie,
Along the heavy road.
The night was dark and stormy,
But blithe of heart were they,
For shining in the distance
The lights of London lay.*

*O gleaming lamps of London that gem the city's crown,
What fortunes lie within you, O Lights of London Town !*

*The years passed on and found them
Within the mighty fold,
The years had brought them trouble,
But brought them little gold,
Oft from their garret window,
On long, still, summer nights,*

*They'd seek the far-off country
Beyond the London lights.*

*O mocking lamps of London, what weary eyes look down,
And mourn the day they saw you, O Lights of London Town !*

*With faces worn and weary,
That told of sorrow's load,
One day a man and woman
Crept down a country road.
They sought their native village,
Heart-broken from the fray,
Yet shining still behind them,
The lights of London lay.*

*O cruel lamps of London, if tears your light could drown,
Your victims' eyes would weep them, O Lights of London Town !*

It was a tramp, you see, who gave me my title and inspired the lines.

When I made Henry Sampson's acquaintance I imbibed a good deal of his love of sport. I became an enthusiastic supporter of boxing—as practised by other people—and during several years I saw every glove-fight that was worth seeing.

But there was a form of sport which I took up and practised myself. I was always a good walker, and I am so still, and it is not so very long ago that a friendly detective officer who had started out with me before midnight for a tour of certain criminal areas left me at four o'clock in the morning with a smiling protest.

"When you came to the station to-night," he said, "and the chief told me off to go with you, I looked you up and down and thought I'd got a soft job. I expected that after about an hour's tramp you would bid me a polite good night, but we've had four hours of it and I'm dog-tired, while you are as fresh as a daisy."

At the time that I took to the road as an amateur pedestrian long-distance walking had come very much into vogue as a professional pursuit.

The first long-distance walking that I saw was when Sir John Astley, "The Mate" of affectionate memory, became a



SIR JOHN ASTLEY

patron of the long wobble shows at the Agricultural Hall. These "wobbles" and "go as you please" affairs used generally to start at midnight on Sunday, and I used to be one of the little crowd that assembled in the midnight gloom to admire Sir John Astley and to hear the representative of the *Sporting Life* fire a pistol as the clock struck twelve.

Edward Peyson Weston was very much boomed by the Press, and the Hall was crowded to see him perform his feats of endurance, but far more popular shows were the long-distance walking competitions at the same hall with Harry Vaughan of Chester, Billy Howes, Ide, "Blower" Brown, and other well-known and popular "peds" taking part in them.

It was while I was with Sampson on *Fun* that I started long-distance walking myself. I used to leave my house in Lonsdale Square at half-past four in the morning, walk to a terminus and catch the 5.15, which in those days was the newspaper train, to some country town twenty or twenty-five miles out.

Arriving at my destination, I used to set my face towards London and start for home, endeavouring to pass a fresh milestone every quarter of an hour. That was a feat I did not always accomplish.

It was one afternoon when walking from St. Albans to London that, near Barnet, I fell in with a young fellow and his wife. They seemed decent folk. The man told me he was tramping to London in search of work.

I slackened my pace and walked with them.

The darkness fell as we tramped along, and as we came to Highgate the lights of the City were just visible in the rather misty darkness.

"Look, Liz," exclaimed the man eagerly to his wife as he stretched out his hand towards the City "paved with gold." "Yonder are the lights o' London."

That night when I got home I had the warm bath I always took after a long tramp, had a light meal, and then I sat down and wrote the verses.

Louis Diehl read them, liked them, and set them to music, and Miss Orridge, a fine contralto, sang them at the Ballad Concerts.

Soon afterwards Louis Diehl came to me and told me that

he had a great idea. He knew a very clever girl who was the show pianist at a pianoforte shop—perhaps I ought to call it an emporium—in Baker Street.

She had an idea of forming a company of “Lady Minstrels,” and she thought she could get the money together. All she wanted was a musical play which could be performed entirely by girls. The young lady’s name was Lila Clay.

Diehl was quite willing to do the music if I would write the libretto. I agreed to do so, and I called the little musical play which was to be performed entirely by the fair sex *A Dress Rehearsal*.

The plot of *A Dress Rehearsal* was simple. A number of schoolgirls were anxious to get up a pantomime for their “breaking-up” entertainment.

The head mistress was very strict in her ideas. She had never been to a theatre in her life, and had no idea what a pantomime was.

The pantomime itself was supposed to be written by one of the elder girls, who was fond of the play, and already had theatrical ambitions of her own, and it was rehearsed by the elocution mistress, an elderly lady who had in her time, before she met with an accident which crippled her slightly, combined comic old women with Shakespearean parts on the transpontine stage.

I was introduced to Lila Clay at the piano shop, and there I read her the operetta in rather unusual circumstances. She had been left in entire charge of the shop at the time, the “governor” having gone to his lunch, and the boy having been sent into the City with a letter. Although my new manageress had to leave me every now and then hurriedly, because some one came into the shop, and had to be attended to by her, I managed to maintain my own enthusiasm to the end of the reading, and Lila—she was “Lila” in the theatrical world for so many years afterwards that I cannot bring myself to write about her in any other name—expressed herself as delighted with the work.

She said she would see her backers at once, and hoped to be able to put the operetta in rehearsal in a few days.

She got together a company of clever and pretty girls—some of them became famous afterwards in musical comedy—

and when everything was ready we started rehearsals. Lila herself was not to act, but to be the musical directress of the minstrels and preside at the piano.

The rehearsals, with the amiable proprietor's permission, took place in the kitchen, which was in the basement.

We had a piano moved down there, and the operetta was rehearsed there every day "under the personal direction of the author and composer."

The upper part of the premises was residential, and the kitchen was used for preparing meals for certain people who occupied them, so there was a cook.

But the cook was very kind, and frequently in the intervals of preparing the meals for upstairs held the prompt book, and on one occasion when one of the young ladies was unable to attend owing to a slight indisposition, the cook read the part, and to the best of her ability sang the music allotted to it, keeping one eye on the extended finger which the composer used as a baton, and the other on the frying-pan, in which a steak and onions were cooking.

We heard a good deal at one time about getting the scent of the hay over the footlights, but it was my first experience of getting the scent of steak and onions over the scene of an operatic rehearsal.

Lila enjoyed the rehearsals immensely, and when Louis Diehl could not come she took his place at the piano.

The proprietor of the piano shop was very kind and considerate, and let Lila stay in the kitchen and look after the rehearsals, only disturbing her occasionally by shouting down the stairs when she was wanted to exhibit the qualities of a piano to a possible purchaser.

The backers—they were two very cheerful and good-looking young gentlemen, one middle-aged gentleman, and one rather elderly gentleman—had authorized Lila to take the Langham Hall for the first appearance of "Lila Clay's Lady Minstrels" and the production of a "new operetta by George R. Sims and Louis Diehl," and the eventful night at last arrived. I look at the old programme and find that it was October 30, 1879.

Half an hour before the curtain was due to rise at the hall, for which, by the by, a week's rent had been paid in

advance by the backers, Diehl and I drove there and went "behind."

The first person we met was one of the girls who was wandering about prettily attired as a lady minstrel in a short frock and dainty silk stockings, but on her feet were her own muddy boots, and on her face was a look of despair.

"Fancy!" she said, "everything's ready, but we have no boots to put on. The beastly old bootmaker's got them with him, but he won't let us have them without the money, and Lila can't find her backers."

I went on to the stage—the curtain, of course, was still down—and there I saw the lady minstrels sitting in a semicircle, all daintily arrayed, but bootless.

Then I met Lila with a smile on her face. Lila Clay's smile was literally the smile that won't come off. I don't think I ever saw her without it, in spite of all the ups and downs of her professional career.

"Don't worry about the boots," she said, "it'll be all right. Some of my backers are sure to be here directly."

But before the backers, who presently arrived at the hall, came behind to discuss the situation with us, a gentleman appeared who described himself as "the secretary." It was the first I had heard of it, but the gentleman explained to me that the backers on his advice had turned the affair into a limited liability company. The funds of the company, he found, were already exhausted, and as a secretary who knew company law thoroughly he was not prepared to advise the directors to call up further capital on the spur of the moment.

I drew the curtain aside, peeped through and saw that a small audience was gradually assembling. The clock was ticking on towards the hour when the show was due to commence.

What was to be done? I was not prepared to find the money for the company myself, because I knew what that might lead to, so I advised Lila to go and interview the directors, who were standing by the pay-box, and keenly watching the course of business there.

Lila succeeded at last in overriding the scruples of the secretary and the four directors agreed to subscribe a sovereign each towards the bootmaker's bill. It was a little more than

that, so the author and composer found the balance. The bootmaker was paid, and the dainty bottines were quickly donned by the fair minstrels.

In the meantime the four directors had squeezed into the small pay-box and were taking it in turns to recoup themselves for the money they had advanced.

From the author and composer's point of view *A Dress Rehearsal* was a great success. From the company's point of view it was a failure. After a very short run it was withdrawn, and the Lila Clay's Minstrel Company went into voluntary liquidation.

The secretary, a clean-shaven gentleman who always carried a black bag and wore a tragic expression, called upon me one evening to announce the fact.

"All right," I said, "it can't be helped, but get the script and the score from the company and send them to me."

"I am afraid I can't do that," he said. "You see, legally the script and the score are the property of the company. As they are the only assets I should not, as secretary, be justified in parting with them."

As neither Diehl nor myself had had a farthing for our work we thought the contention of the solemn secretary a particularly cool one.

However, we eventually got our property back. Lila called a special meeting of her directors, and acting on our behalf laughed them out of their "only assets."

There was an originality about Lila Clay's first theatrical enterprise which ought to have ensured it a better fate. Thirty-seven years ago the young manageress anticipated a system of representation that has been adopted within the last few months by many of the West End theatres.

The programme of the "Lila Clay Lady Minstrels," with *A Dress Rehearsal* as the second part, was announced for performance "Every Monday, Thursday, and Friday at eight, and Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday at three."

I cannot remember the reason of this somewhat original arrangement. It was original at the time, but would be looked upon as nothing out of the ordinary to-day.

A few months before the production of *A Dress Rehearsal* I had, at the suggestion of Mr. Ashton Dilke, undertaken to

start and edit a new penny weekly periodical of the lighter order, something between the *Family Herald* and the *Welcome Guest*.

The new paper appeared under the title of *One and All*, edited by Geo. R. Sims.

It was in *One and All* that my first novel, "Rogues and Vagabonds," appeared, and a good deal of my original scenario of the, as yet, unplayed *Lights o' London* went to the making of the story. And it was as the editor of *One and All* that I printed a contribution—one of the earliest, I believe, to the London Press—by a young Irishman newly arrived in London. His name was George Bernard Shaw.

But let me return to Lila Clay. Soon after the close of the run of *A Dress Rehearsal* she went into the provinces with Dick South's Opera Company.

At the termination of the first tour I met her one Sunday morning in Park Street, Camden Town. It was a cold grey day, but her smile seemed to light up the whole thoroughfare from the Britannia to the York and Albany.

"Well, Lila," I said, "how is the opera company getting on?"

"Oh, fine," she said. "We haven't had much money, but we've had lots of fun."

For years after that Lila was always bobbing up serenely. She got the Opera Comique and produced *The Adamless Eden* there, by Savile Clarke. *The Adamless Eden* was a musical piece performed entirely by ladies. The orchestra was feminine, and conducted by Lila herself, and admirably conducted, for she was an excellent musician.

And there was no trouble about boots.

Some time after that Lila turned up in the ballroom scene in *La Cigale* at the Lyric. There was a music gallery in the scene, and there Lila conducted a female orchestra.

When I met her again it was at Newmarket. She had become a sportswoman, and was to be seen regularly at the principal race meetings. She used to get some excellent tips. As they were my racing days we met constantly, and Lila's tips were very useful.

One day she came to me and said: "I've got a pony on Day Dawn at 20 to 1. You ought to have a fiver." I had two fivers on Day Dawn, and it won.

I used to meet Lila racing for a year or two, and she was always merry and bright, and appeared to be on the best of terms with everybody, backers, owners, jockeys, and herself.

Then she dropped out, and one day I heard that she had gone back to her people and died at home after a lingering and painful illness.

Poor Lila ! May the earth lie lightly on her ! She was a feather-brain always and foolish often, but in the words of the old song " her bright smile haunts me still," and to meet her and talk with her was always an exhilarating experience.

A Dress Rehearsal, in spite of its fate seven and thirty years ago at the Langham Hall, is still a property. Messrs. Samuel French and Co., the theatrical publishers of Southampton Street, Strand, look after the amateur rights for me, and every quarter they make up an account of the fees they have received and send me what Digby Grant in *The Two Roses* used to call " a little cheque."

How much I owe, taking one consideration with another, to the tramp who said to his wife, as we jogged along the Great North Road together, " Yonder are the lights o' London ! "

CHAPTER X

GLANCING back over the years when I was a playgoer with apparently very little chance of becoming a playwright, many an old familiar form revisits the pale glimpses of the stage moon in Limelight Land when all the programmes were "scented by Rimmel."

I remember Benjamin Webster's wonderful performance in *Janet Pride*, an old-time Adelphi triumph that one seldom hears mentioned to-day by old playgoers. I must have seen it in a revival. I was a baby when it was first produced. And I have never forgotten Webster's Penn Holder in *One Touch of Nature*.

I remember his Robert Landry in the *Dead Heart*. I remember the fine old actor in his heyday, and I remember his decline and fall—literally his fall.

It was when *The Wandering Jew* was produced with James Fernandez—I wonder how many playgoers remember "Jimmy" at the old Bower Saloon that we called the Sour Baloon?—as Dagobert, and Webster played Rodin.

In one scene he fell on the stage in a sitting posture and had to be helped gently to his feet by two of the characters who ought, according to the play, to have refused to stretch out a hand to him, even if he had been drowning.

I was at the Adelphi on the first night of *No Thoroughfare*. Miss Woolgar as Sally Goldstraw electrified the house with her pathetic despair in the Foundling Hospital, Webster was an ideal Joey Ladle, and Fechter was Obenreizer, and Carlotta Leclerq was Marguerite.

I remember that on the first night when Fechter stole to the bed of Walter Wilding to give him his quietus a voice in the gallery shouted, "Wake up! wake up! he's going to kill you!" but Fechter had so completely gripped the house that there was only a momentary titter.

And the *Colleen Bawn*! All London flocked to the Adelphi to see Dion Boucicault's masterly adaptation of Gerald Griffin's novel, "The Collegians," and all London talked for many a month after the first night of Boucicault's Myles na Coppaleen and Edmund Falconer's Danny Mann.

And I booked my seat for the Adelphi in those days, a pit-stall numbered and reserved for half a crown. And there was a beautiful golden-haired lady in the box-office who did all the box-office business and had no assistant.

Once again the old boards are trodden by Mme. Celeste. Who that saw her as Miami in *The Green Bushes* and Cynthia in *The Flowers of the Forest* can ever forget her?

I remember when Toole and Paul Bedford were the stock comedians of the old house, and from the far-off shores of the sixties the echo of "I believe you, my boy!" sounds in my ears.

I see again Kate Bateman as Leah. I see Rip van Winkle Jefferson wake after his long sleep on the Catskill Mountains and go back into the village and meet his wife and child. And the wife was played by "Our Mrs. Billington."

And Emmet! "Schneider, how you vas?"

I see Robson in *The Porter's Knot* at the Olympic, and as Jim Baggs in *The Wandering Minstrel*, and I see again a big house thrilled with the intensity of his burlesque tragedy in *Medea*. Once again I see him in the burlesque of *Mazeppa*, and I hear him singing:

*Had it not been for Olinska,
Dat bery lubly gal,
Her father would have sent me
To the foundling hospital.
Where de boys are dressed in woollen clothes
To warm their little limbs,
And smell of yellow soap and sing
Like little cherubims.*

If I misquote from memory, forgive me. It is so long ago.

And Widdicombe! Who remembers his admirable performance in the screaming farces that were the curtain-raisers of the sixties? *Poor Pillicoddy* and *The Two Polts*.

I remember the farces at the Adelphi—the screaming farces splendidly acted by the leading comedians and comediennes of the house. And half-price at the Strand at nine o'clock, a shilling in the pit, and the merry burlesques of Brough and Byron with the excruciating puns that made the house writhe with joy. The more atrocious the pun the more delirious the mirth.

The idols of the pit and gallery and, for the matter of that, of the stalls and boxes too, were Jimmy Rogers and Johnny Clarke, and Marie Wilton trod the boards daintily and brought to burlesque and extravaganza the art that was to charm the playgoing world later in comedy of the highest order.

I remember the Royalty and Frank Burnand winning his laurels with laughing London at his feet; *Ixion* with Jenny Willmore as the hero and Ada Cavendish as Venus, and lovely Lydia Maitland and the bevy of beauties that Mrs. Charles Selby had gathered together for her campaign of gaiety at the little theatre in Dean Street.

And then came *Black-Eyed Susan*, with Dewar as Captain Crosstree and Patty Oliver as Susan. And Patty Oliver and Dewar sang "Pretty See-usan, don't say No," and soon all England was singing it: *Flying Scud*, with Charlotte Saunders, the one and only Charlotte Saunders—there never was another—as the jockey. And Fanny Josephs as Lord Willoughby fighting his duel on the sands of Calais!

I remember the Queen's and *The Last Days of Pompeii*, with Henrietta Hodson as the blind girl, and the famous banqueting scene with the voluptuaries of the period crowned with roses at the festive board. And the Roman acrobat on the tight-rope for their amusement—luncheon lectures and tango teas had not yet been introduced as post-prandial delights—and the yells of laughter that arose when the acrobat, who was a heavy fellow and looked like a Græco-Roman wrestler, missed his footing and fell into the Pompeian pie, which went pop like a paper bag. All playgoers who are still young enough will remember that scene and the wild shrieks of laughter that rang to the roof.

At the St. James's Theatre lovely Miss Herbert in *Lady Audley's Secret*, with Ada Dyas as Phœbe Marks, and *Hunted*

Down, or The Two Lives of Mary Leigh, with an actor named Henry Irving making his mark in it.

And the Leigh Murrays, and the Wigans, the Mirror Theatre and the Holborn Amphitheatre, and Emily Fowler at the Olympic, and the Charing Cross Theatre.

I remember the burlesque of *The Swan and Edgar*, with Frank Matthews and Charles Young, *The Rapid Thaw*, which was a quick frost, with the roller-skating scene in it. And the first night of *War*, when they called derisively for the author at the finish, and Tom Robertson, the author, lay on his deathbed.

James and Thorne and Montague, with the early glories of the Vaudeville, comedies that took the town by storm, and burlesques to follow! *The Two Roses* and Irving's Digby Grant, and George Honey's *Our Mr. Jenkins*; *Our Boys*, which was to beat all previous records in its length of run. I was there on the first night. It was a real Byron first night. The whole house leaning forward eagerly waiting for the next joke with an anticipatory grin, and hailing it with a yell when it came.

The Buckstone days at the Haymarket, with the Chippendales and Henry Compton and Amy Sedgwick, were glittering days, but not all of them were golden ones.

But *The Overland Route* was a great success, and when *Our American Cousin* alighted in the Haymarket all his English cousins flocked to see him.

Lord Dundreary came and saw and conquered. He has remained a type to this day, and his whiskers are classical. But we went Dundreary mad in '61. The shop windows were filled with Dundreary scarves, and Brother Sam scarves, and there were Dundreary collars and Dundreary shirts, and Dundrearyisms were on every lip.

Sothern was a practical joker, and his pranks in private life were as much the talk of the town as his stage performances.

A hallowed memory is the reign of the Bancrofts at the Prince of Wales's and later at the Haymarket.

When they took the Haymarket they abolished the pit, and there was trouble on the first night. The pittites, who had been compelled to find accommodation in other parts of the

building, made themselves heard for some considerable time before they gave the actors a chance.

The pits and galleries in those days had a habit of airing their first-night views with vigour and determination.

There was a time when James Mortimer, who started the *London Figaro*, a paper subsidized by the Empress of the French, could not go into the stalls on the first night without being roughly greeted by the pit and gallery. He had offended them in some way which I forget.

Mortimer never missed a first night, and he always had a play of his own in his overcoat pocket. If the piece looked like being a failure "Jimmy" would, at the fall of the curtain, pop round on to the stage, buttonhole the manager and say to him, "Look here, old chap, I've got just the play you want."

James Mortimer was quite a kind-hearted little man, though he occasionally allowed the criticisms of the *London Figaro* to be anything but kindly ones. And for some reason we used to call him "The Corsican."

He wrote a good many plays, mostly adaptations, but I think the only one that he made any money by was *Gloriana*.

To the last he had a habit of pulling out a gold watch on the slightest provocation and letting you see by the inscription that it had been presented to him by the Empress of the French. Peace to his memory!

I remember the first production of the best adaptation of a French play which has ever been made—Tom Taylor's *Ticket of Leave Man*, the play that gave us the situation, "Who will take it?" "I, Hawkshaw, the detective," a situation which has remained the feature of a certain class of British drama ever since.

I remember Henry Neville's fine performance of Bob Brierly and his Henry Dunbar, with Kate Terry as his daughter, her face fearfully and wonderfully tied up for the toothache as a disguise.

I remember the first night of Lord Newry's *Ecarté*, and who that was there will ever forget it?

CHAPTER XI

WHEN I come in these reminiscences to the production of my first melodrama, *The Lights o' London*, we shall be in the first year of the 'eighties.

The 'eighties saw a very different London from the London of the 'seventies.

In the 'sixties and even well on into the 'seventies the home was a house, and the flat system was mainly confined to the new and improved working-class dwellings founded by the estimable Mr. Peabody. And the family meal was taken at the family table.

The popular restaurant as we understand it to-day had not arrived, and the separate table in public eating establishments was as unusual as to-day it is general.

In the popular and in some of the fashionable dining-rooms and taverns, both in the West End and the City, you sat in small compartments called "boxes," and wooden partitions divided one set of lunchers or diners from their neighbours, and ladies were rarely of the party.

In my early City days, when I had both the time for lunch and the money, I used to go to the dining-rooms that were popularly known as "slap bangs." They had taken their title from the line in the song which at that time was on everybody's lips, every barrel-organ—there were no piano-organs in those days—and every concertina, "Slap, bang! Here we are again!"

My favourite houses of call for lunch were His Lordship's Larder in Cheapside, and Lake and Turner's in the same thoroughfare; the Post Office Tavern, at the back of the G.P.O.; Rudkin's Salutation in Newgate Street; the eighteenpenny table d'hôtes—there were two, one at one and one at five—at the Cathedral Tavern opposite St. Paul's; and, when it would run to it, Krehl's in Coleman Street, where

the menu was in French but some of the dishes had the flavour of the Fatherland about them.

Later on, when I had come into Fleet Street and the Strand, Simpson's, with its old English fare, captured me for a time, and I always sat in one of the old-fashioned boxes and watched the ancients with delight. By the "ancients" I mean the old gentlemen who were supposed to have lunched or dined at Simpson's from their youth upwards.

The old-fashioned "boxes" were a feature of the Albion Tavern opposite Drury Lane Theatre, and this was a great supper house in my early days for the lights—and occasionally for the shadows—of the theatrical profession.

I sat in one of the "boxes" of the Albion one night and watched Augustus Harris, Henry Pettitt, and Paul Merritt—they were seated in the same compartment with me—divide the American fees for *The World*.

Pettitt had that morning arrived in London from New York, and he had collected the fees due and brought them over with him in "ready."

The division of the fees of *The World* in "ready" in the box in the Albion took place in the old-fashioned way. The pile of notes were dealt out in the "one for me, one for you, and one for you" system, until the end was reached.

When Felix Spiers and Christopher Pond came from Australia they revolutionized the buffet business.

They made their first start at Farringdon Street, but both there and at Ludgate Hill, which presently became the centre of their activity, the box system prevailed.

I knew both Felix Spiers and Christopher Pond in the early days of their enterprise, before the Criterion was dreamed of, and in those days when we lunched in the dining-rooms of the firm—they were mainly attached to railway stations then—the great feature was a steak "S. and P."

There were no tea-shops in Fleet Street in those days, but there were plenty of coffee-shops, and here again the high-backed wooden boxes were the rule.

Some of these coffee-houses were journalistic haunts. We used to go to them about six o'clock and have tea and muffins.

There was one coffee-shop that I used to go to evening after evening for weeks. It had a bound set of *Bentley's*

Miscellany for the use of customers. To eat hot buttered muffins and turn the pages of *Bentley's Miscellany* without damage to the property was not an easy task, and the volumes bore ample testimony to their popularity with the patrons.

The tea-shop grew out of four things, the flat system, the increased facilities of transit which brought the ladies of the suburbs flocking to London in the afternoon, the vast increase in the employment of women in City and West End offices, and the decay of the alcoholic habit among young men.

In my early City days there were no typists and very few lady clerks, and the catering was almost entirely for men.

There were no typists in my early Strand days, and my first plays were copied by hand, but there were three or four theatrical copyists who would prepare a beautifully written copy of a five-act drama quite as quickly as you can get it done to-day at any typing agency.

It was ten o'clock one Saturday night when Pettitt and I completed the script of *In the Ranks*. An old theatrical copyist, a fine old fellow with a clean-shaven face and a mass of wonderful grey hair, called at my house in Gower Street for it at half-past ten, as he had been instructed to do. At eleven o'clock on Monday morning the working script of that five-act drama was delivered to me.

The tea-shop killed the coffee-shop, and gradually the foreign restaurant began to kill the chop-house and tavern dining-room, and to diminish the attendance at the eighteen-penny and two shilling "ordinaries."

Cheap foreign travel organized on a vast scale was gradually changing the habits and customs of the Londoner. He was becoming less insular and more cosmopolitan in his tastes, and he was gradually learning how to enjoy himself without the display of exuberant animal spirits.

It is difficult for the younger generation of Londoners to conceive the condition of the West End after nightfall as it was in the late 'sixties and well on into the 'seventies.

There was a time when two black bullies, one called Kangaroo and the other named Plantagenet Green, known to his intimates as Planner Green, were the terrors of the West.

I have seen Kangaroo come into a West End saloon and pick up the glass of champagne which a young duke had just

poured out for a lady who was never likely to be his duchess, and toss it off, and then go to a table at which a young Guardsman was similarly entertaining a fair companion and drink up their wine too.

It was not considered wise to resent the insolence of this ruffian in a practical manner. Dukes do not want to wear their coronets above a broken nose, and young Guardsmen would find two lovely black eyes inconvenient extras.

But the black eye was quite a common result of a night out in those times. It was so general that in a side street in the Haymarket an artist had a studio specially arranged for the painting of black eyes, and it was open from eight o'clock in the evening till four o'clock in the morning.

The songs of the lion comiques of those days echoed the habits of the West. "The Champagne Charlies" and the "Rolling Home in the Morning Boys" were types of the night life of London.

Of that life as I saw it in the West End of London and the East End of London I have many abiding memories, and I had one black eye which I led my mother to believe was the result of an accidental collision with a lamp-post.

As a matter of fact I got it in a free fight at the Alhambra one Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race night.

Oh, those Boat Race nights! I wonder what London would think of them now?

Of the roystering night life of London in the 'sixties and early 'seventies I have a lively remembrance.

My experiences of night life began at rather an early period of my career because my opportunities were exceptional.

In the 'fifties, when my juvenile experiences commenced, the general attitude with regard to theatrical entertainment and the form of amusement which we to-day call a variety entertainment was not so benevolent as it is to-day.

The matinée girl and the matinée child were unknown.

The serious early and mid-Victorians would have been aghast at the idea of vast palaces of entertainment being daily crowded with afternoon audiences, and except at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsun many of the theatres had no matinée performances at all.

There was a very large body of citizens and citizenesses

who were opposed to "theatrical" entertainment in any shape or form, and the children of my childhood when they were taken to an entertainment were generally to be found at the Crystal Palace, the Colosseum, where they saw the Earthquake of Lisbon and the Panorama of London by Night—I need hardly say there were no human figures in it—the Polytechnic, where they went down in the diving-bell and saw Pepper's ghost; the Christy, afterwards the Moore and Burgess, Minstrels, where the burnt-corked company sang pathetic songs about closing the shutters because Willie was dead, and meeting Belle Mahone at Heaven's gate. There were always five or six items in the entertainment that dealt with the early demise of amiable little boys and gentle maidens or the approaching dissolution of elderly black gentlemen who heard the angels calling.

The nearest approach to theatrical entertainment that the children of the Puritan survival were permitted was the Royal Gallery of Illustration, where the German Reeds flourished for many years, and Woodin's Olio of Oddities, which were sometimes given in a real theatre, and they were permitted occasionally to visit a circus, which was more or less a permanent institution in London in the old days.

Waxworks, dissolving views, and panoramas were popular, and lectures and readings were largely attended, especially the readings of Charles Dickens and the Mont Blanc entertainment of Albert Smith.

I heard Charles Dickens read from his works twice, and one of my most treasured possessions is his own drawing of the reading-desk which afterwards became so familiar to the great public who flocked to hear him.

My grandfather, the Sandemanian, would have limited my early experiences of entertainment London to a selection from this programme, but fortunately I had another grandfather, and he, like my mother, was passionately fond of the theatre, and liked to see everything in the entertainment world that was going on. So when I was quite a boy I was taken to the Oxford Music Hall in the first week of its opening.

We sat at a little table close to the chairman, and the chairman sat in a raised chair at a table near the orchestra, with his back turned to the performers. He was a cheery

individual with a bright and shining face and a bright and shining manner.

He wore a large white shirt-front, in which sparkled a diamond about the size of the glass stopper of a scent-bottle, and at each new turn he rapped the table vigorously with his hammer and announced the name of the performer. To stand the chairman a drink was considered a great privilege.

I was also taken to almost the first *café chantant* started in London. There was an amiable Italian gentleman who lived in Cranbourn Street, Leicester Square, and who came over to this country when he was twenty, and lived in it till he was seventy. He once told me that the English people were deficient in the gift of languages, because he had lived in London for fifty years, and Londoners were still unable to speak Italian.

He was a fine old chap and a wonderful character, and had very intimate relations with the Italian Opera singers. I am under the impression that he used to finance them when they found themselves temporarily short of money.

The Italian gentleman had found a portion of the money to start an enterprise which I believe was called the Imperial Music Hall, and he persuaded my father to take a number of shares. The music-hall—it was really a *café chantant* on the French system—occupied a portion of Savile House.

I do not know how much money my father put into it, but I know that he had several books of tickets of admission sent him, and that on the opening night he and the Italian gentleman allowed me to accompany them and to sit between them at a marble table during the performance.

The career of the *café chantant* did not end in a blaze of triumph, but it ended in a blaze.

The scene of the conflagration remained a gaping ruin for many years, but ultimately the site came into the possession of Mr. Nicol, of the *Café Royal*, and on that site arose the present Empire Theatre, so that upon the Imperial foundation with which I was associated in my boyhood arose a world-famed Empire.

The rowdy night life of London in the 'sixties was not confined to the West End. It was quite the thing for the

"Corinthians" of the 'sixties to make excursions to the East, and when I first became a student of "life as she is lived" my studies occasionally took me after nightfall in the direction of Ratcliffe Highway, and I have a vivid remembrance of weird and wonderful scenes in the dancing saloons attached to Paddy's Goose, which was in the notorious Highway, the Mahogany Bar, which was close by, and in the disreputable dens—for they were dens and they were disreputable—of Tiger Bay.

In those days Jack ashore was frequently Jack with his pocket full of gold, and there were plenty of sharks, male and female, whose sole worldly occupation it was to assist Jack in getting rid of his money.

Many a sailor, after a night of revelry in the dancing dram-shops of the Highway, would be lured, drunken, dazed and sometimes drugged, into the back courts of Artichoke Hill and St. John's Hill. There poor Jack was always robbed and sometimes murdered.

When the "Corinthians" of the 'sixties and the early 'seventies went East to make a night of it at the East End temples dedicated to the worship of Bacchus and Venus they were frequently accompanied by a professional bruiser, who was technically known as their "minder."

It was the duty of the "minder" to shadow them as a detective to-day shadows a foreign royal visitor taking a stroll about town.

Some of the "minders" were straight, but one or two of them were crooks, and I have known more than one assault upon a patron deliberately planned by a "minder" in order that at the psychological moment he, the "minder," might rush in and do doughty service for his chief, a service for which he would be handsomely rewarded.

Some of these "minders" did so well out of their patrons that they became prosperous and blossomed into sportsmen and patrons of the Turf.

One or two of the prosperous "minders" used to be very much in evidence in the early days of the Criterion when the American bar was in its glory. But that is a glory which has long since departed, and so has the glory of the "minder."

I met many of them at the East End nights' entertainments, both at glove-fights and in the Ratcliff Highway "ball-rooms."

But it was in Fleet Street that some of the old-time bruisers came into "My Life."

CHAPTER XII

It was Thackeray, I think, who sang :

*O pretty page with the dimpled chin,
Wait till you come to forty year.*

It was in the 'eighties that I came to forty, and so in these memories of the past I find myself standing with reluctant feet where the 'thirties and the 'forties meet.

There is a charm about our early memories that the later ones seldom possess. So before I step into the 'eighties and the comparatively modern I would fain linger for a brief space among my early memories of the London that I love.

In the days of my youth, though Bartholomew Fair had long since passed away, pleasure fairs were still held in the outlying districts of the Metropolis.

The once famous fair of Gospel Oak was still held within walking distance of my boyhood's home. Greenwich Fair was still a great Cockney festival, and Charlton Fair retained many of its ancient glories. And there were others.

The pleasure gardens were still popular, and there were tea gardens with arbours attached to scores of the better known public-houses.

I can remember when on a Sunday evening you might see many of the Bohemianly inclined children of Thespis sitting at the little tables in the tea-garden attached to the York and Albany in Park Street, Camden Town. And from the Mother Redcap and the Britannia to the York and Albany was in those days quite a Sunday morning theatrical promenade.

Rosherville was still the place to spend a happy day, and there was a good deal of the side-show element there.

North Woolwich Gardens still attracted its thousands, and when William Holland, with his famous moustache and his

genius for showmanship, ruled the roost there, it had a fair spell of popularity.

When I first came into Fleet Street the pleasure steamers in the summer were laden with trippers for the North Woolwich Gardens.

Bill Holland—he was the son of a draper in Newington Causeway—had been associated with almost every form of entertainment enterprise. He called himself “The People’s Caterer.”

He was at various periods of his career the lessee of the Surrey Theatre, where he made a feature of pantomime with a Moon as a star—Miss Nellie Moon—manager of the Alhambra, impresario—his own word on the occasion—of a gigantic circus which he ran, of all places in the world, at the Covent Garden Opera House, the entrepreneur of a great circus at the Agricultural Hall, where he wanted to put on a real bull-fight but naturally was not allowed to, and the manager of the Blackpool Winter Gardens.

During his reign at North Woolwich Gardens he used to hold shows of every description. Once he held a moustache show and took the prize himself, but his baby shows are the best remembered of any.

Holland was a real showman, and not only understood the art of publicity but the still more useful art of obtaining gratuitous advertisement.

He was a great favourite with Pressmen, and every Sunday during the summer he used to give an informal Press lunch at the Gardens. The room in which the lunch was held commanded a view of the landing-stage, and when the steamer came to the pier Holland would stand up and count the passengers who were disembarking for the Gardens.

He used to count, “Ten—twenty—thirty—forty—fifty,” and when he got to the “fifty” he would turn to his guests and say, “It’s all right to-day, boys. We’ll have another bottle.”

In London itself in the free and easy ‘sixties there was no grandmotherly Government and very little harassing legislation to interfere with the pleasures of the people. Though Bartholomew Fair had been abolished, there was a bit of it on Britannia Fields, Hoxton, and a good many of

its features were to be found scattered about the streets of London.

Acrobats, jugglers, and peep-showmen set up their pitches and performed where they chose. The usual attraction for the peep-show was the Murder in the Red Barn.

Simple Simon could have tossed the pieman for his wares at a dozen street corners in those days; German bands performed in street and square at all hours of the day and night, and niggers gave their alfresco concerts in places where now special police are provided to direct the traffic.

Of one of the nigger parties, the conductor was dressed as Punch, and many of the heads of these bands were quite popular characters with Londoners, and their names were household words.

Those were the days of the freaks. General Tom Thumb was more famous than any military commander of the same rank. With Minnie Warren and Commodore Nutt he captured London and made a triumphant tour of the kingdom.

Milly-Christine, "the double-headed nightingale," drew the town, and anything possessed of too many or too few limbs had a distinct commercial value. Donato, the dancing man with one leg, got a great deal more money for his performance than many an artist who was unfortunate enough to have two.

You did not have bands at the banquet in those days, and people took and enjoyed their meals without music, but in the streets you had vocal and instrumental music the whole day long, and every murder had its melody.

The "chaunters" stood along the kerbs—generally after nightfall—and hawked their doleful ditties. They did a roaring trade whenever a sensational crime had gripped the public fancy. Within five minutes of an execution the "chaunters" were along the streets celebrating the event and hawking the unfortunate wretch's "last dying confession" while he was still dangling at the end of the rope.

On May Days Jack-in-the-Green and his rowdy train careered about the town from early morning until late in the afternoon. I have seen Jack arrayed in all his green glory dancing and frolicking along the Strand on the "chimney sweeps' holiday," celebrated with full honours in Trafalgar

Square. And there were no lions at the base of Nelson's Column then.

In the days of my youth there was no compulsory education, and thousands of people, young and old, were unable to read, and among the masses it was quite as common to "make your cross" as to sign your name, but for the benefit of the young people of the masses who could read the market was flooded with objectionable literature.

The "penny dreadful" of my youth was far more dreadful than the periodicals which earned the title in later days.

The windows of newspaper shops of a certain class were filled with publications as objectionable in every way as the old vulgar Valentines that for years made the fourteenth of February a byword and a reproach.

There were some dreadful stories published in penny numbers for the reading of the young who were permitted to choose their own literature. Two of the worst that I remember were "Charley Wag" and "The Woman with the Yellow Hair."

These publications would to-day have been seized by the police within half an hour of their appearance.

Stories for boys were of the bluggest order. I remember "The Blue Dwarf" and "Varney the Vampire, or The Feast of Blood"; and "Spring-Heeled Jack," popularly supposed to have been an eccentric Marquess of Waterford, was as great a hero as Dick Turpin. "George Barnwell" and "Moll Cutpurse" were, of course, classics.

Some of the amusements provided for youth were as objectionable as the literature. Why the police permitted them to exist was a mystery to many even in the free and easy 'sixties.

In the days of my young manhood such ghastly entertainments as "The Judge and Jury" presided over by "Chief Baron" Nicholson were still tolerated. Here the principal divorce cases of the day were tried over again, and the chief attraction was a degraded comedian who appeared as a female witness.

There was a freedom of innuendo in the music-halls that would not be tolerated to-day at a cabman's "free and easy."

For the class for whom Cremorne was too "swell" there

was plenty of alfresco dancing, and at the Grecian, once the well-known Eagle, in the City Road, and at Highbury Barn, dancing was always one of the features of the evening's entertainment.

It was at the Grecian Theatre, admirably managed and run by George Conquest, that Paul Meritt and Henry Pettitt made their first start as dramatists.

Paul Meritt was of Polish origin, but his mother was a Yorkshire woman, and his real name was Metzger. In his expansive moments he used to tell me that he was a descendant of Sobieski.

When I first knew him he was a clerk at Thomas Tapling's, the great carpet warehousemen in Gresham Street. Henry Pettitt was a writing master at the North London Collegiate School.

Meritt at the Grecian combined the post of local dramatist with that of giving the pass-out checks at the theatre exit for the interval in the grounds.

George Conquest always had a strong company ; and many of them, especially those who played for him in pantomime, became later on popular West End stars.

The story of how Paul Meritt took his name is characteristic of the man. He was an enormously stout man with a thin, high-pitched voice, not at all a bad fellow when you knew him, but eccentric in his habits.

He could never resist the temptation of the food that he fancied, and I remember meeting him one day walking along the Strand with some pease pudding which he had purchased in a shop, and was eating from the paper in which it had been served to him. He had seen the pudding, fancied it, and was unable to resist the impulse.

When he and Pettitt first came together to collaborate Meritt suggested that they should adopt stage names for the partnership, and that they should be known as Meritt and Success. He would be Meritt and Pettitt could call himself Success.

Pettitt, who had a keener sense of humour than Meritt, preferred not to tempt Providence. But Paul was Meritt to the end of his days.

The only occasion on which I remember him using his own

name was when he took a house on Haverstock Hill which had a double frontage. One entrance was on the Hill and the other entrance was the Chalk Farm end of Adelaide Road.

There was a brass plate on the Haverstock Hill door with "Mr. Paul Meritt" upon it, and there was a brass plate on the Adelaide Road door with "Mr. Paul Metzger" upon it. It was a bit of characteristic "swank" on Paul's part and that was all.

There was no Dangerous Performances Act in those days, and there were plenty of exhibitions to which the people flocked attracted by the risk to life and limb which was run by the performer.

Blondin on the high rope at the Crystal Palace is, of course, history. The hero of Niagara wrote his name upon the story of his time.

But there was a female Blondin who was advertised to cross the river on a high rope from Cremorne, and young women were taken up into the clouds dangling from balloons and there cast adrift to descend in parachutes.

At the Aquarium the famous Farini was running Lulu in a sensational act. Lulu was supposed at the time to be a pretty little girl, but as a matter of fact Lulu's name was Farini and Lulu was Farini's son.

Zazel was another star of the old Aquarium days. Zazel was called "The Human Cannon Ball," and used to be fired from a cannon to the roof of the Aquarium, where she caught a trapeze.

The Aquarium was started originally as an educational establishment—more or less. Wybrow Robertson, the husband of Miss Lytton, the charming actress, was one of the founders, and Fatty Coleman was largely concerned in the management of the enterprise.

There was a fellowship of the Royal Aquarium and a number of well-known men were elected to that honour, and in the comic papers the new distinction of "F.R.A." was worked for all it was worth.

The Aquarium soon became a place of entertainment only.

I have a tragic memory of the declining years of the Aquarium.

I had a beautifully bred little bulldog and I named him

Barney Barnato. Before I gave my dog that name I had asked the permission of the famous financier to do so. "Yes, certainly," was the reply, "but I hope he will never do anything to injure the name."

"Make your mind easy," I answered. "My dog will never interfere with your career and I hope you will never interfere with his."

The idea of anything he might do interfering with my dog's career amused Barnato immensely, and he repeated the joke to several of his friends.

Now this is what happened. My little dog won his first at every show at which he had been exhibited, and the time came when he could be entered for the championship class.

When the show day arrived my man took Barney down to the Aquarium early in the morning in order to have him benched at nine o'clock.

At nine o'clock I woke up and found the usual cup of tea and the daily papers at my bedside. I opened the *Daily Telegraph*, and the first thing that met my eyes was the big headlines that announced that Barney Barnato had committed suicide by leaping from the deck of a liner into the sea.

I sent a messenger off at once with instructions that Barney was to be removed from his bench and brought home.

My little dog never had another chance of showing in a championship class. The famous financier whose name he bore *had* injured his career.

One more memory of the Westminster Aquarium comes to me as I write.

I went to the Aquarium to see a show to which I had been invited.

The first thing I heard when I entered the building was that Colonel North had died suddenly at his City office.

Colonel North's name has always been associated in my mind with the death of the friend who was for so many years my chief, the editor of *Fun* and the editor of the *Referee*.

On the day that Colonel North won the Jubilee, Henry Sampson, who was most anxious to see the race, was detained at home by some correspondence which had to be dealt with at once.

It was a bitterly cold day with a biting east wind. Just when he had hardly a moment to spare to catch the train to Kempton, Sampson discovered that his overcoat had been accidentally torn, so instead of putting it on he flung it angrily on a chair and went off for a day's racing without it.

In the bitter, searching wind of a winter that lingered in the lap of May, he caught a severe cold and he came home ill. The cold turned to double pneumonia, and within a week my old friend and chief had passed away. Colonel North's Jubilee win with Nunthorpe was the last race he ever saw.

CHAPTER XIII

It was in the winter of 1880 that I accepted Alfred Hemming's invitation to go to Leeds and see him perform with the Waltons in the Christmas pantomime at the Grand Theatre, of which Mr. Wilson Barrett was then the lessee and manager.

Mr. Wilton Jones was the author of the "Christmas Annual," and before I went to the theatre Hemming brought him to see me at the Great Northern Hotel, and we had an interesting chat.

It was the first time I had been in Leeds, and I wanted to know more about it than I should see in the main thoroughfares. It was an early habit of mine to wander off the beaten track wherever I happened to find myself, and I have been able to see the hidden life of cities, the poverty areas, and the criminal areas, and the seamy side generally with much advantage to myself, and now and then, I hope, with advantage to the community. And in all my wanderings in black patches and through the danger areas I have never come to grief in the United Kingdom, and only once on the Continent. That was when I took Charles Warner to see the seamy side of Naples between midnight and 4 A.M.

Mr. J. Wilton Jones, who had heard of my curious taste, had promised to show me round the less known quarters of Leeds. He was at that time on the *Yorkshire Post*.

The *Yorkshire Post* was the only paper in Leeds that dealt with theatrical matters. The *Leeds Mercury* was then the property of Mr. E. Baines, who had the Puritan objection to the playhouse, and as a result no theatrical advertisements were accepted by the *Mercury*, and no notice of any theatrical performance was ever given so long as it remained under the Baines' control.

The Grand Theatre, with its fine decorations and sumptuous appointments, was rather a novelty in Leeds in those days.

Tragedians starring in the theatre used to complain that it took some time for the gods and goddesses to settle down to the first act, and the performers on the stage were occasionally interrupted by audible exclamations, such as, "Ay, look at t' gowd on t' ceilin', lass!"

Hemming had secured a box for me at the Grand, from which I could see in comfort the performance of the pantomime, which was *Aladdin*.

It was a wonderful company. In addition to the Hemming and Walton family, it included Joe Eldred, of the cuffs and collars, one of the best Micawbers the stage had ever seen; the famous sisters Dot and Minnie Mario, and, as the principal boy, the great pantomime and music-hall favourite, Jenny Hill, generally known and advertised as "The Vital Spark."

Soon after the first scene a gentleman entered my box. He was a shortish gentleman with classical features and a romantic appearance. He introduced himself very much after the style in which Stanley introduced himself to Livingstone in Darkest Africa.

"Mr. Sims, I presume?" he exclaimed, and in answer to my polite bow of acquiescence, added, "I am Wilson Barrett."

That was my first meeting with the manager with whom I was to be associated for many busy and prosperous years.

Barrett sat by my side and we watched the progress of the pantomime together. His principal concern, I remember, was that some of the ladies of the ballet would wear their own jewellery, and their own jewellery did not harmonize with their environment.

Butterflies with ear-rings and dragon-flies with gold locket round their necks distressed the artistic eye of the manager, and Wilson Barrett was always an artist in his productions.

He did not tell me that there was a youth employed in the theatre who mixed the distemper for the scenic artists and designed comic masks, and whose name was Phil May. I learned that afterwards, when Phil May told me himself of the Leeds days, and how he had, as a boy, been employed at Archibald Ramsden's piano warehouse to polish the brass and run errands.

Some time afterwards Phil May came to London, and for a while took to the stage. As a matter of fact, when my

Romany Rye was running for a month at the Pavilion Theatre, Whitechapel, the two ruffians, Ginger Bill and the Scragger, were played by Leonard Merrick, now the popular novelist, and by Phil May.

Barrett and I had a little chat, and he invited me to sup with him at his house on the Sunday evening. I went, and there found several members of the company who had been invited to meet me, and I was introduced to a lady for whose artistic ability I had from my early youth had a great admiration.

The lady was Mrs. Wilson Barrett, who on the stage was the popular Miss Heath. Miss Heath was a finished actress and a finished elocutionist, and at one time held the appointment of reader to Queen Victoria.

Barrett took me into his studio and showed me some pictures he had painted himself, and duly impressed me with the fact that, above all things, he loved art.

Up to this time I had only known him as supporting Miss Heath in Wills's play of *Jane Shore*, which had been a success both in town and in the provinces.

After supper the conversation became general, and I only had about five minutes' private chat with Barrett, but during that five minutes he told me that he had heard from Hemming that I had a melodrama that I wanted to place. I told him that I had, and tried to tell him something about it.

I did not succeed in telling him very much because there were about fourteen people sitting round the table at the time, and the party was a merry one. But when I left Barrett that night to go back to my hotel he said, "I shan't forget about your drama, and perhaps later on I may ask you to let me hear a little more about it."

I stayed in Leeds for two or three days and explored some of its "mysteries" with my friend Wilton Jones.

But I saw no more of Barrett, and I heard nothing more from him for many months. When I did he had taken the Court Theatre, London, and was starring himself and Modjeska in W. G. Wills's *Juana*.

I came back from Leeds without the slightest idea that Wilson Barrett had been in any way impressed with the

chat we had had after supper at his house about the drama. But I had not been idle.

Early in the spring of 1881 Miss Kate Lawler, who had taken the Royalty, sent for me and asked me if I had a farcical comedy that would suit her.

As a matter of fact I had not, but I was loath to lose the opportunity of a return to the little theatre where I had done so well with *Crutch and Toothpick*, so after a moment's hesitation I said I had a farcical comedy very nearly completed.

The fair manageress told me that she must fix her programme up by the following Wednesday—at the latest.

So I went home—it was then Saturday afternoon—worked day and night on the French play, and by midday on Wednesday I had completed the three-act comedy which I called *The Member for Slocum*.

I made the hero a member of Parliament and the heroine a lady of pronounced views on the equality of the sexes, temporarily separated from her husband and devoting herself vigorously to a campaign for women's rights.

The part of "Arethusa"—that was the young lady's name—was one that I felt convinced Kate Lawler would play admirably.

The Member for Slocum was produced at the Royalty Theatre on May 8, 1881. Arthur Williams played the M.P., Miss Harriet Coveney played his mother-in-law, also a women's rights lady, who had sent her daughter's husband to Parliament in order to ensure the passage of the Bill for the emancipation of women; and the husband of the heroine was played by Mr. Frank Cooper.

It was a fine cast, and on the first night the play was an immense success. It had a long run at the Royalty with the burlesque of *Don Juan* as the after-piece, and the provincial rights were quickly snapped up. Mr. John L. Shine took the No. 1 rights, Mr. Haldane Crichton took the No. 2, Miss Eliza Weathersby took the American rights, and in America the M.P. was played by Nat Goodwin.

CHAPTER XIV

I MUST have been working at hurricane speed in the year 1881, for two months before the production of *The Member for Slocum* at the Royalty I had written a burlesque for Alfred Hemming and the Walton Family. It was called a musical extravaganza. The title was *The Corsican-Brother-Babes-in-the-Wood*, and it was produced at the Theatre Royal, Hull, on March 19, 1881. On April 25 a new farcical comedy, *Mother-in-Law*, which I had written for the Hemmings to play with the burlesque, had been produced at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Liverpool.

There was one advantage about Liverpool in those days—at least, I thought it an advantage. There was a comfortable little hotel near the theatre where up till about five o'clock in the morning you could always find amusing and interesting company in the smoking-room.

I used to go to Liverpool by a train which left Euston about nine, and arrived at Lime Street at three o'clock in the morning.

Going straight to the hotel and into the smoking-room I was sure of pleasant company for an hour before turning into bed. And as a rule the company was theatrical and journalistic.

I used to be a bit tired after the long journey from town, and about four I usually felt like turning in. Alfred Hemming and George Walton—who, if I was rehearsing in Liverpool with them, would meet me in the smoking-room to have a chat about business—were generally ready to go at four, but if, as sometimes happened, Aynsley Cooke was among the late guests, he would plead with me to keep him company “a bit longer.”

Aynsley Cooke, who was at that time touring with the Carl Rosa Opera Company, was such an interesting talker

and so full of reminiscences that he generally managed to keep me till five.

On one occasion we sat chatting till six, and then as I thought it was too late—or too early—to go to bed, we went for a blow on the landing-stage.

Sometimes the landing-stage early morning blow would inspire a desire for something breezier still, and we would take the ferry to New Brighton, and explore and sample the early breakfast resources of Egg and Ham Terrace.

Writing of the once famous promenade which was all Mersey on one side and all Menu on the other, reminds me that one day when I was travelling with Dan Leno to Glasgow, where Mr. Milton Bode was producing *In Gay Piccadilly*, a musical comedy of which I was the author, Clarence Corri the composer, and the great comedian the “hero”—I mentioned my early experiences of New Brighton and Egg and Ham Terrace. The Terrace consisted principally of eating-houses and cheap restaurants of the “bob a nob” order in those days—hence its name.

“Ah,” said Leno, “I have good reason to remember Egg and Ham Terrace. It was there that I made what was practically my first public appearance as an entertainer.

“I had gone across from Liverpool one Easter Monday. I was a very small boy, very hard up, and very hungry, and I looked at the good things in the windows of the eating-houses with longing eyes.

“Presently I passed a ‘restaurant’ which was packed with people putting away the shilling dinner vigorously.

“There was a piano inside, and one of the customers was trying to play it and trying to sing a song. But he couldn’t play or sing for nuts.

“Then an idea came to me. The proprietor was standing at the door looking up and down the parade with an eye to likely customers. I went up to him and said, ‘Governor, do you want somebody to sing songs for ‘em?—I can.’

“‘Can you?’ he said. ‘Well, come in, and if you’re all right I’ll give you a bob to sing till three o’clock and a hot dinner when you’ve finished.’ I went in and struck up, and all the people stared at me, I was such a bit of a boy.

But I sang a comic song and did a bit of a dance on the

end of it, and they banged the tables and nearly shouted the roof off—I'd fairly hit 'em!

"I expected the proprietor to come and congratulate me, but he took me on one side and said: 'Very good, my boy—but you make 'em too noisy. You see, my missis is lying dead upstairs, and it jars a bit on me.'

"Of course I was very sorry and said I'd sing something quieter. So I started a sentimental ballad.

"It didn't go at all, and all the customers began to get up and go. Then the proprietor came to me again.

"'Look here, my boy,' he said, 'you'd better give 'em one of the comic ones again. *After all, she can't hear!*'"

The last time I was at New Brighton it was quite a fashionable resort, and the glory of Egg and Ham Terrace had apparently departed. But that was many years after I had produced *Mother-in-Law* at the pretty and popular little theatre in Clayton Square. I saw *Mother-in-Law* satisfactorily launched and I returned to London.

On May 7, at the Court Theatre, Sloane Square, Wilson Barrett had produced *Juana*, by W. G. Wills, with Mme. Modjeska in the name part.

Juana was not a financial success, so it was quickly shelved, and Barrett put on Bronson Howard's *Banker's Daughter*—the James Albery version called *The Old Love and the New*—with himself and Miss Eastlake as the hero and heroine.

Presently Barrett heard that there was a chance of getting the Princess's.

"I shall get the Princess's," he said to me. "It is as good as settled. I shall open there with *The Old Love and the New*, but I don't think it's quite strong enough for a run in a big house. What about the play you told me of at Leeds? Can I have it to read?"

"Certainly. I'll send it to you to-night."

"Good. If I think it will suit the Princess's and we can come to terms, I'll do it."

At last!

I knew it would suit the Princess's, and I was quite sure that so far as I was concerned there would be no difficulty about terms. I polished up *The Lights o' London* and sent it to Barrett to read, and hoped for the best.

My hands were by this time pretty full, for although I had produced two new plays and a burlesque in three months, I was hard at work on *Flats*, "a farcical comedy in four stories," for Charles Wyndham.

It was produced at the Criterion in July, and in the cast were W. J. Hill, Owen Dove, Herbert Standing, George Giddens, and Mrs. Alfred Mellon.

I had at the same time undertaken to write a knock-about comedy for the Majiltons, which was due for production early in September. As a matter of fact I produced this comedy, which was called *The Gay City*, at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham, on September 8, with Charles Majilton, Lionel Rignold, and Ramsay Danvers in the principal parts.

Then I rushed back to town for the dress rehearsal of *The Lights o' London*, which was produced on the evening of September 10.

1881 was my record year, for three weeks after the production of *The Lights o' London* at the Princess's a new three-act comedy of mine, *The Halfway House*, was produced by James and Thorne at the Vaudeville.

Not very long afterwards, in addition to a dozen touring companies, four West End London theatres were playing pieces of which I was the author.

That was a record for which a few years ago I trembled when Sir J. M. Barrie was also being played at four London theatres. But the record has not yet been beaten. The brilliant author of *Peter Pan* only made a tie of it.

The Lights o' London did not see the footlights of London until the autumn of 1881, and I became a farer in Fleet Street and a sojourner in the Strand in 1870. Before I come to the first night of *The Lights o' London* at the Princess's there are other reminiscences to be recorded.

Now that as I write Germany is once more at war with France, memories of the terrible war that five and forty years ago cost Napoleon III his throne, sent the Prince Imperial to his death in Zululand, and made the Empress Eugénie an exile, come thick and fast upon me.

In 1870 I took a summer holiday in Sweden. I travelled in various directions, but Stockholm fascinated me, and there I spent the better part of a month developing a partiality

for Swedish punch and picking up sufficient Swedish to enable me, with my knowledge of German, to understand the plays I saw at the theatre.

On one of the steamers that ply between Stockholm and Upsala I met the then heir to the Crown of Sweden and Norway, Prince Oscar.

We were a small party of English. The Prince overheard us trying to ask a question of one of the officers in Swedish, but the officer failed to understand, so he came to our assistance, answering questions himself in excellent English.

We had not the slightest idea who he was, and finding a Swede who talked such good English we plied him with tourist questions, all of which he answered smilingly.

It was by accident, just before we disembarked at our destination, that we learnt that we had been making use of the Crown Prince.

I was deputed to express to the Prince our regret for an innocent lack of reverence for royalty, and the Prince laughingly accepted the apology, and I bowed and backed as elegantly as I could, having the funnel just behind me, but he wished me good day and shook hands with me.

Little did I dream that this kindly Prince would, when he was King of Sweden and Norway, make me a Knight of the Royal Order of St. Olaf for my services to one of his subjects, the Norwegian gentleman, Adolf Beck, whose case was one of the romances, or, rather, I should say, one of the tragedies, of our method of criminal procedure.

My Swedish trip has remained engraved upon my memory because of its termination.

I sailed from Gothenburg on board the *Louisa Anna Fanny*, bound for Millwall. We had a cargo of telegraph poles, cattle, and matches, and for some reason we lay and tossed about for six hours without making any progress.

But we weathered the storm, passed through the French Fleet, which was pursuing a policy of masterly inactivity "somewhere in the North Sea," and arrived off Thames-haven about four o'clock on the afternoon of Sunday, September 3, and there a pilot came on board to take us up the river.

He had brought with him a number of Sunday newspapers

for the passengers, and also the latest news. There was a tremendous rush as the pilot's boat came alongside.

Everybody on board was anxious to hear how things had been going in the theatre of war, and among our passengers were a dozen old Garibaldians who were going to join the French army. And it was from the pilot that September afternoon in 1870 that I heard that Sedan had fallen.

It was soon after this that I made the acquaintance of Mr. Andrew Chatto, then the right hand of John Camden Hotten, the Piccadilly publisher, of whose business exploits and adventures an interesting volume might be written.

It was Hotten who first introduced the stories and poems of Bret Harte to the British public, and the Rev. J. M. Bellew—I "sat under him" at St. Mark's, Hamilton Terrace—wrote the preface for the first volume.

It was John Camden Hotten who published the first English edition of the ballads of Colonel John Hay, and he advertised the appearance of the volume in this highly effective manner :

The dramatic force and vigour of these ballads will startle English readers. The last lines of the first ballad are simply terrific, something entirely different from what any English author ever dreamed of, much less put into print.

The volume which contained this announcement contained a list of "other important new books," and from this I take the following :

"Hotten's edition of 'Les Contes Drolatiques,' 'Droll Stories collected from the Abbeys of Touraine par Balzac,' with four hundred and twenty-five marvellous, extravagant, and fantastic designs by Doré, 12s. 6d. Direct application must be made to Mr. Hotten for this volume."

This edition was in French. Some time after the announcement appeared John Camden Hotten ceased to be a publisher.

In connexion with his sudden disappearance from his business there is a story to be told.

Ambrose Bierce had come to London, and at Tom Hood's invitation had done a good deal of work for *Fun*. Bierce was what might be called a weird and powerful humorist. In San Francisco his humour was occasionally staggering. On

this side of the Atlantic it had to be diluted to the capacity of the English digestion.

Bierce had brought over with him a lot of cuttings from his contributions to American newspapers. He showed them to John Thomson at the Unity Club, and Thomson said, "My boy, Hotten will jump at them."

The cuttings were pasted in a book, and Bierce called the collection, "The Fiend's Delight," by Dod Grile. That was Bierce's *nom de plume* in 'Frisco.

Hotten, after a little haggle, bought the book for twenty pounds, and gave Bierce a cheque.

Bierce at that time had not a banking account in London, but Henry Sampson had. Sampson gave Bierce cash for the cheque and paid it into his account. It was returned by the bankers unpaid.

When Bierce heard of this he was in a furious rage. He rushed up to Hotten's place in Piccadilly and demanded to see him. He was told that Mr. Hotten was not well and had not been to business for a day or two.

"That's not true!" exclaimed Bierce. "He's keeping out of my way." And off he rushed to Hotten's residence to see if he were there.

The door was opened by a pale-faced girl.

"Where's Mr. Hotten?" said Bierce.

"If you'll follow me, sir," said the girl, "I'll take you to him."

Bierce followed the girl up the stairs. She pushed a door open and stood aside.

Bierce entered the room and saw what he supposed to be Hotten lying in bed. Waving the dishonoured cheque in his right hand, Bierce approached the apparent invalid and exclaimed, "Look here, Hotten! what the devil does this mean?" Then he started back with a cry of horror.

John Camden Hotten was lying there, but he was dead.

The girl, it seems, was expecting the undertaker to come and measure the corpse. She had mistaken Bierce for that functionary, and so without demur had led him up into the death-chamber.

Ambrose Bierce was my colleague and frequent companion in the middle 'seventies. Later on he returned to the States

and did some very fine work in short stories which have been published in volume form under the title of "In the Midst of Life" and are among the finest short stories in the English language.

In the matter of short weird story writing many American critics reckon him only second to Edgar Allan Poe.

For many years I heard of him occasionally from friends on the other side, but he disappeared in Mexico in the year 1913, and has, alas, never since been heard of.

It was John Camden Hotten to whom John Thomson, when he was Swinburne's secretary, took Adah Isaacs Menken and the poems which she published under the title of "Infelicia."

Many years ago my friend Andrew Chatto gave me the whole of the original manuscript and the cuttings from which "Infelicia" was set up, and I have them now.

But my reminiscences of Adah Isaacs Menken, actress, poetess, and beautiful woman of many adventures, are for another chapter. It is the story of the "Contes Drolatiques" that I am about to tell.

When Hotten died Dan Chatto—nobody ever called him Andrew—found a partner and took over the business, and thus established what is now the famous firm of Chatto and Windus.

Hotten had made a considerable reputation by his issues, more or less authorized, of the American humorists who came along in the 'sixties, not in single spies, but in battalions. It was Hotten who gave us "Artemus Ward among the Mormons" for a shilling.

He also brought out an annual which he called *The Piccadilly Annual*. It included contributions from Dickens, Thackeray, and other masters which had been lifted, or, shall I say, transferred, from other sources.

I have somewhere the indignant letters which Dickens's son and Thackeray's daughter sent to Tom Hood, whose father had also suffered from the Hotten habit.

Soon after he had acquired the business and all Hotten's copyrights—some of them were copywrongs, I am afraid—Chatto, looking over the Doré illustrations to the "Contes Drolatiques," had an idea.



THE SIAMESE TWINS

"This book is a masterpiece," he said to himself. "It is by Balzac, and the illustrations are by Doré, but it is in French. What a fine sale there would be for it if it were in English!"

There had been talk for some time of an English version of the "Contes Drolatiques." Sala had been consulted about it by Hotten, but Sala said he thought it was impossible to translate the work—it was written in old French—and preserve the atmosphere of the Moyen Age, which was one of the charms of the original.

A translation into modern English would be undesirable. To tell the tales in the English of the nineteenth century would make them offensive, not only to the student, but to the ordinary reader.

But Chatto still had his idea. He knew that I was familiar with the old French authors, and one day he came to me with a proposition. If I would translate the "Contes Drolatiques" for him he would pay me seventy-five pounds for my work.

I wanted the seventy-five pounds, and I appreciated the chance of doing something which would be considered in literary circles a *tour de force*.

I accepted the commission on condition that my name should not appear on the title page. There was no false modesty about my desire to avoid publicity.

I desired the translation to remain anonymous for family reasons. An English version of the "Contes Drolatiques" was not the sort of book that a boy would present to his mother and exclaim proudly, "Alone I did it!"

Chatto agreed, gave me at my own request twenty-five pounds down on the signing of the contract and an undertaking to pay me the other fifty on the delivery of the manuscript.

I wanted the fifty, so I set to work steadily to complete the translation. But I had to read myself into the atmosphere, so for some weeks I read steadily the old English authors whose phraseology would be in harmony with the period and environment of the stories of the Abbeys of Touraine.

I did a good deal of the work on my desk in the City, and I put in a lot of extra time at home in the evening. I did not

get to the Unity Club till 12.30. That was the time when the members began to drop in and the company became sociable and sunny.

It was a long job and a very difficult job, but three months after I had signed the contract the whole of the manuscript was in Chatto's hands, and in due course he published it.

It was a beautiful and artistic volume with 425 illustrations by Doré, complete and unabridged, price 12s. 6d. The binding was a beautiful red, and there was plenty of gold on it. It looked just the sort of book to adorn the drawing-room table.

Chatto published and advertised the book in the ordinary way, and he subscribed it to the trade in the ordinary way.

Many of the London and provincial booksellers, attracted by the name of Doré, ordered a considerable number.

Now the "Droll Stories" *are* droll, but they are not stories for maidens and boys. Of that some of the family booksellers who ordered copies were evidently not aware. But a few of them soon found out.

Some of them returned the copies with a note to the effect that at the time they had given the order they were unaware of the nature of the work. But some of the booksellers, remaining in ignorance, exhibited the volume in a way to attract the attention of their customers. And there was trouble.

There was a firm in the Midlands who did a large business with schools. One day a schoolmaster entered their shop, and attracted by the cover and the illustrations ordered a dozen of the books, which he wanted for prizes for the boys. It is needless to say that he had not gone beyond the cover in making his selection.

Fortunately, just before prize day arrived the schoolmaster's wife accidentally picked up one of the volumes, opened it and glanced at the contents. She had not glanced far before she uttered an exclamation of horror and rushed into her husband's study.

"John!" she exclaimed, "what on earth have you brought a book like this into the school for? Are you mad?"

The schoolmaster took the book from his wife's hands, looked into it, and instantly dispatched an indignant letter

to the bookseller, bidding him send a messenger at once to remove the books from the premises.

The bookseller wrote a letter to Chatto, and the hand of the writer evidently trembled with indignation, for there was a blot upon every page of it.

Then there was further trouble, and the second trouble was caused by that eminent author and critic, John Ruskin.

Chatto had placed below his advertisement of the book a quotation from Ruskin.

The extract had reference to the art of Doré. By the omission of a line and the substitution of asterisks, it appeared as though Ruskin was referring specially to the "*Contes Drolatiques*."

Ruskin saw the announcement and wrote an indignant letter to Chatto. He also sent a letter to one of the literary newspapers in which he charged Chatto, the publisher, with "mutilating criticism for the purpose of advertisement."

Then the secretary of a certain society wrote to Chatto and said that they had had complaints with regard to the book. They would rather, if possible, avoid prosecution in the case of a work by a famous French author, but they strongly advised Chatto to withdraw the book from circulation.

Chatto thought very highly of the book himself, but he had to acknowledge that he had made a mistake in issuing it as an ordinary book for general circulation, and so he reluctantly came to the conclusion that the best thing he could do would be to follow the advice of the amiable secretary.

Chatto removed the book from his list and sold the whole thing, I believe, to an American firm.

Last year the gentleman at the British Museum who is responsible for the compiling of the reading-room catalogue wrote to me and said that it was generally understood that I was responsible for the English version of the "*Contes Drolatiques*." Had I any objection to my name being placed against the work in the British Museum Catalogue? I said that I had none, and in the new catalogue it is there.

But this is the first time I have told the true story of my first book.

CHAPTER XV

BUT let me return to the *Lights o' London*. Barrett read the play, suggested a structural alteration in the last act which was undoubtedly of advantage to the play, accepted it and began to discuss terms.

Up to that time I had only received for my theatrical work a fixed payment or a nightly fee. I had been compelled at last to leave the City. I could not possibly put in eight hours a day in the City, write a play a month, and contribute regularly to three weekly papers.

The fees I had so far received had not been sufficient to clear off the trifling sum of a thousand pounds for which I had in some way managed to become indebted to certain gentlemen who only charged sixty per cent. interest for the accommodation.

When Wilson Barrett said he would accept *The Lights o' London* I saw my chance. It might be the means of enabling me to pay up and live happily ever afterwards.

So I said, "Well, suppose you give me five hundred pounds down and——"

Barrett did not let me finish.

"I don't want to pay anything down," said Barrett, "or make a hard and fast arrangement. If the play should fail the arrangement you^m suggest would be unfair to me. If it should succeed it would be unfair to you. I will suggest an agreement to you that will be fair to us both."

He called in an attendant and said to him, "Ask Mr. Herman to come to me," and presently there entered upon the scene a middle-aged foreign-looking gentleman with rather pronounced features, and one eye. This was Mr. Henry Herman, Wilson Barrett's business manager, a quaint character and a remarkable personality.

"Daddy" Herman—that was the friendly name we gave

him at the Princess's—was an Alsatian. He was educated at a military college, but went to America, where he fought in the Confederate ranks. It was during the Civil War that he lost an eye and supplied the deficiency with a glass one.

Daddy Herman, after many romantic adventures, found himself with his share of the fees of Mr. Henry Arthur Jones's immensely successful *Silver King* rolling in, a comparatively wealthy man.

He furnished a house at Hampstead in gorgeous style, and he began to collect valuable books and grangerize them. He carried out this part of his programme with such excellent judgment that his library when sold at Sotheby's realized sixteen thousand pounds.

But it had to be sold, and I fancy before his death poor Herman had had to sell or assign the rights he held in *The Silver King* and in other plays. He spent too lavishly, and the summer days did not last.

Although Herman was an excellent linguist, his Alsatian accent always hovered about his English, and he hardly ever spoke a sentence without ending it with the words "See, see?"

It was Herman who was responsible for the libretto of *The Fay o' Fire*, a romantic opera with Edward Jones as the composer. It was produced at the Opera Comique in November 1885, and in it Miss Marie Tempest made what was practically her London debut.

After he left the Princess's Herman collaborated with another old soldier, my friend and for many years my confrère on the *Referee*, David Christie Murray. With Murray he wrote several novels, the better known of which are, perhaps, "One Traveller Returns" and "The Bishop's Bible."

One year Herman and Christie Murray, in order to work at ease, took a villa somewhere between Nice and Monte Carlo. It was situated in a lonely spot on the hills, and after walking home to it late one night from Monte Carlo Herman and Christie Murray decided that it was "not convenient." So, although they had paid two months' rent in advance, they wandered down the mountain side and took rooms in the town.

Herman explained the situation to me when I met him one

night at a café chantant in Nice, and long before he had said "See, see?" half a dozen times I did see.

Neither of the two old soldiers relished the idea of that lonely walk to their mountain home in the dead of night. Their nervousness was quite justified, for the lonely roads between Nice and Monte Carlo were frequently the scenes of robberies with violence, and in one or two cases the victims had been murdered.

But Monte Carlo is a long way from Oxford Street. Let me return to the Princess's.

Herman, while Barrett was talking with me, had been preparing an agreement for our joint approval. Barrett read it, said he thought that would do, and handed it to me to consider. This was the principal portion of the agreement:

"Princess's Theatre, Oxford Street, W.

June 20th, 1881.

"It is agreed between us that you cede to me and I take from you the sole right of producing your new play, now entitled (provisionally) *The Lights o' London*, in all English-speaking countries on the following terms: I agree to produce the said play at the Princess's Theatre and elsewhere, and will pay you the following fees as consideration of this agreement:

"In London. If the sums taken as receipts do not exceed £600 per week of six performances, £2 2s. per performance.

"If over £600 up to £700, 5 per cent. of the gross receipts.

"If over £700 up to £800, $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the gross receipts.

"If over £800, 10 per cent. of the gross receipts.

"In the Provinces. Five per cent. of all sums up to £50 per night, and 10 per cent. of sums after £50 per night have been taken by the theatre.

"This agreement to remain in force for three years after the first production of the play."

It was a much better agreement than I should have thought of suggesting, but I did not give that fact away to my audience.

"Oh, all right," I said to Barrett, "if it suits you let it be

that way." That it was that way I have every reason to be thankful.

A few weeks later the melodrama which had been submitted to half a dozen London managers and politely rejected by them was put into rehearsal at the Princess's, and on September 10, 1881, it was produced.

It was produced with a wonderful cast. Barrett played the hero, Miss Eastlake the heroine, George Barrett played Jarvis, the showman, and dear old Mrs. Stephens, who was always referred to as "the only Quakeress on the stage"—she wore something very like a Quaker bonnet to the last—was the showman's wife.

All the little characters, and there were many, were admirably played. In two of them, Philosopher Jack and Percy de Vere, "Esquire," Mr. Charles Coote and Mr. Neville Doone made striking successes. And the villain was played by a young actor from the provinces named E. S. Willard.

When the curtain fell that night there was no doubt about the success of *The Lights o' London*, and I went home with a light heart.

I was living in the Camden Road. It was a fine night, and I walked from the Princess's. At the top of Park Street I came upon a huge crowd and the familiar sounds of fire engines at work. The Park Theatre was in flames, and before the morning it had been burnt to the ground.

It is one of those odd coincidences of "three" that my first three melodramas should each of them have been associated with a fire.

On the first night of *The Lights o' London* I saw the Park Theatre burnt down. When *The Romany Rye*, my second drama, was playing at the Theatre Royal, Exeter, the scenery caught fire and about a hundred and twenty-seven people perished in the catastrophe. My third melodrama was *In the Ranks*. The theatre in which it was produced in New York was very shortly afterwards burnt down.

The Lights o' London has been played somewhere on the face of the earth ever since that September evening in 1881. This year the play celebrated the thirty-fifth anniversary of its birth.

During the present year I have been receiving fees for its

performance in Danish in Copenhagen, and it is to be played in Stockholm and in Christiania.

After the Princess's production I received charming letters of congratulation from Dion Boucicault, F. C. Burnand, and H. J. Byron, who, because of their then prolific output for the stage, were known as "The Three Busy Bees."

Byron wrote, "I rejoice that the ranks of the men who work honestly for the stage have received such an addition, and I am delighted also for the sake of Barrett, the straightest and best of all good fellows."

And the straightest and best of good fellows Wilson Barrett was to the end, though he had at times a terribly uphill task.

The Princess's had for many years been unfortunate.

It was built by a Mr. Hamlet, a wealthy jeweller of Prince's Street, Piccadilly, in 1828. Before it was two years old it was burnt down, and the loss of fifty thousand pounds broke the jeweller.

The next tenant, Mr. Reinagel, lost a lot of money. A manager named Maddox fought manfully at the Princess's, but he had to confess himself beaten.

Charles Kean made many brilliant successes. At the end of the season of 1858 he publicly announced that he had lost four thousand pounds over that season alone. In 1859 he gave it up.

It brought no luck to a young actor named Henry Irving in 1859. He made his London debut there in a piece called *Ivy Hall*, which was a failure, and he went back disheartened to the provinces for another seven years.

Fechter made a great reputation at the Princess's but no profit. In 1865 it had a run of luck with Boucicault's *Streets of London* and *Arrah na Pogue*, but Tom Robertson, the most successful author of his day, met misfortune there in 1867. The theatre closed suddenly in 1868, and George Vining, the manager, returned the few advance bookings.

Then Webster became the manager and made no money. Chatterton succeeded him and lost his money.

Walter Gooch ran it for a time with fair success, rebuilt it, and the adjacent houses fell into the excavation, and the claims ultimately ruined Gooch.

Then came Wilson Barrett and *The Lights o' London*.

Barrett made a fortune during the first years of his tenancy of the Princess's with *The Lights o' London*, *The Romany Rye*, *The Silver King*, and *Claudian*, but he entrusted the bulk of it to a friend to invest for him, and lost it all.

When he was still at the Princess's he had to call a meeting of his principal creditors. He promised to pay everybody in full, and eventually he did. But for years he had a heavy burden of debt on his shoulders.

The turning in the long road of ill-luck came at last. He wrote and produced *The Sign of the Cross*. And fortune smiled again. He not only paid off the whole of his debts, but he left a comfortable sum.

He died after an operation for a painful internal complaint, but he was cheery to the last. He had booked a tour, but the week before it should have started his case had become so serious that he was told that only an operation would save his life.

"You will have to be opened to-morrow," said the surgeon.

"Ah," replied the sick man, "and I was to have opened myself on Monday."

But when the *Lights* was produced there was no cloud in the sky. The theatre was packed night after night to its capacity.

I have said that Barrett might have bought all my rights for a thousand pounds, and if he had made a cash offer probably for less. My first week's royalties were a hundred and fifty pounds, and within a fortnight a thousand pounds had been paid down on account of American rights, and in the States the play ran for many years, and the receipts were then a record.

In England two travelling companies toured the provinces with it, and the No. 1 company would stay in a town for a month or six weeks playing to record business.

In the provinces an admirable young actor named Leonard Boyne played Barrett's part. Leonard Boyne is an admirable young actor still, but he was even younger then than he is now.

The Lights o' London, before Wilson Barrett accepted it, had been offered to four London managers and two provincial ones.

Walter Gooch, when he finally rejected it, said he had a play which he felt convinced was a better one. It was a play called *Branded*, and it ran twelve nights.

The Gattis, with whom I was soon afterwards happily and prosperously associated at the Adelphi, refused it because they pinned their faith to a play called *The Crimson Cross*. This was produced about the same time as the *Lights*, and in it were a galaxy of stars with Adelaide Neilson as the bright particular one.

But *The Crimson Cross* was a failure, and after a short run was never heard of again.

Adelaide Neilson was a beautiful woman and a fascinating actress. Her career was one long romance.

Adelaide Neilson's real name was Elizabeth Ann Brown. She was the illegitimate daughter of a handsome Spaniard and an Englishwoman, and was born in a little village some few miles out of Bradford.

Her mother subsequently married a Mr. Bland, and Elizabeth Brown became known as Lizzie Bland, and as Lizzie Bland she was a nurse-girl, and at one time a "filler" at a woollen factory.

When she was about sixteen she seems to have discovered the true story of her birth, and not wishing to be an encumbrance, or for some other reason, she ran away from home and spent her first night lying on a bench in the park.

She presently, it is said, became a barmaid in the neighbourhood of the Haymarket, but the story of Adelaide Neilson as told by those who knew her intimately is as follows :

She is said to have been found in the park by an officer in the Carabineers who took compassion on her and accommodated her with a bed in his chambers.

Clement Scott, who knew as much about her as any one, said that she was educated by a generous and kindly disposed gentleman, well known to fame, who gave her her first start in life.

In 1864 she married Mr. Philip Henry Lee, the son of a Northamptonshire parson, and down at the quiet vicarage of Stoke Bruern, Adelaide Neilson passed the happiest days of her life, idolized by the villagers and taking a part at the Sunday school.

The marriage did not, however, turn out happily, for in the year 1876 Miss Neilson obtained a divorce from her husband in the Supreme Court of New York, the husband and wife being both naturalized American citizens.

In 1865 she played Juliet at the Royalty Theatre, and no one took very much notice of it. Her popularity commenced when she played Nelly Armroyd at the Adelphi in *Lost in London*, and gradually she came to her own.

She died very suddenly in great agony in a fashionable café in the Bois de Boulogne, and in spite of every effort on the part of the Paris correspondent of an English newspaper, her body was taken to the Morgue.

By her will—she died a comparatively rich woman, possessing something like thirty thousand pounds—she left a considerable sum of money to a dramatic critic, Mr. Joseph Knight.

Clement Scott, to whom she had not left anything, said something on the subject, and the *Referee* commented on the nature of his remarks. What Henry Sampson wrote was considered by Clement Scott to be libellous. Scott brought an action, and the case, which lasted for several days, attracted a considerable amount of attention.

The jury awarded Scott fifteen hundred pounds, which was considerably more than the amount Adelaide Neilson had left Joe Knight.

Acting in the interests of my editor, and being friendly myself with Scott and Sir George Lewis, his solicitor, I was able to bring about a friendly understanding between the parties, which materially reduced the amount for which my chief had to draw a cheque.

But I have wandered far from the *Lights*. The Press notices of my first melodrama were not only kindly, but flattering.

There were two exceptions, and one gentleman said that the play would probably have a short run, but while it remained in the bill it would serve a useful purpose in attracting a certain number of undesirable men and women from the streets.

My friend Edmund Yates cut that notice out and sent it to me with a characteristic letter :

"MY DEAR SIMS," he wrote. "This notice is written by ——. I have always found it useful to know my enemies. I give you this man's name that you may know one of yours."

I don't think I troubled much about that notice. I have even forgotten the name of my enemy, so I cannot say if he came to a bad end.

But one thing that was said by a critic about the *Lights* still remains in my memory. Mr. William Archer, in analysing my first melodramatic contribution to the stage, said I was "Zola diluted at Aldgate Pump."

I don't know whether it was meant as a compliment, but I took it as one, and I am still grateful to the famous critic for it.

CHAPTER XVI

WITH *The Lights o' London* in the full tide of success in London, in the provinces, and in America, I had more time to devote to certain social questions in which I was deeply interested.

I was still "a bit of a Radical," as the phrase went, and I accepted invitations to lecture on Sunday evenings at certain Radical clubs and for certain Radical societies.

I wonder, by the by, whether my old friend John Burns remembers the night at Claremont Hall when an aged and eccentric Anarchist, who used to wear a red tie and a slouch hat and sell regicidal pamphlets on Sunday afternoons in Trafalgar Square and shout "Death to kings!" at Sunday evening democratic debates, leapt on the platform at the close of a lecture and proceeded to demand the blood, not only of the entire Royal Family, but of all the members of the British aristocracy? I remember the kindly way in which "The People's John" appealed to the old gentleman to be merciful.

The Sunday concert and the Sunday theatrical performance had not then captured the fancy of working-class clubland.

I had joined a committee in Southwark, of which Mr. Arthur Cohen, K.C., was the president, and my friend Lord Southwark, then Mr. Richard Causton, the vice-president. And "our Mrs. Burgwin" was also a member. It was a society that devoted itself to the improvement of working-class conditions in the Borough.

My connexion with Southwark arose through a Sunday evening lecture at a Radical club. My subject was "The Poetry of Poverty," illustrated by recitations from my own "Dagonet Ballads."

After the lecture a young man who had been an attentive listener came to me and said, "My name is Arthur B. Moss.

I am a School Board officer for the poorest area in the Borough. If you would like to see some of the prose of poverty I shall be glad to take you round."

I accepted the offer gladly and spent a day or two in the old Mint, and then, like *Oliver Twist*, I asked for more.

But I have never cared to keep acquired knowledge to myself, and so I looked about for what the dear old penny-a-liners of my youth used to call "a medium of publicity." Fortunately, at that time Mr. Gilbert Dalziel, who had started a new illustrated paper, the *Pictorial World*, sent for me and asked me if I had an idea for a series of articles which would illustrate well.

It was in that way that "How the Poor Live" came to be written and illustrated by Fred Barnard, the artist chosen by Mr. Dalziel.

It was not a pleasant journey that we made together, for the conditions prevailing at that time in the poverty areas of London were terrible beyond description.

We went into dens of dirt, disease, and despair, and explored the terrible tenement houses from cellar to garret.

We smoked like furnaces the whole time, but we did not smoke cigars or silver-mounted briars. In order to avoid all suspicion of swank and to make the inhabitants feel more at home in our company, we smoked short clay pipes and coloured them a beautiful black in the course of our pilgrimage of pain through Poverty Land.

These illustrated articles made something of a sensation. The clergy preached sermons upon them, as they did many years later when on Citizen Sunday the subject chosen for pulpit discourse in a hundred churches was my "Cry of the Children."

The way in which men and women were herded together in the vilest and most insanitary conditions in the capital of the British Empire touched the public conscience, and for a time "slumming" became fashionable.

Eventually I was invited to be a witness before the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor, of which the Prince of Wales was the president, and Sir Charles Dilke, I think, the chairman.

Lord Salisbury, who was a member of the Commission,

invited me to enlighten the commissioners as to the meaning of the phrase " 'appy dosser," and Mr. Samuel Morley tried to make me say that drink was the cause of poverty, and pounded away at me like an Old Bailey cross-examiner until Lord Salisbury came to my rescue and contended that I had fully answered the question when I said that drink was one of the causes of poverty, but that poverty was one of the causes of drink.

For a whole month I explored the poverty areas and the criminal areas of South London, and the criminal areas fascinated me.

I saw pickpockets, thieves, and burglars in their more or less domestic circumstances. I rapidly acquired a knowledge of thieves' slang and I made the personal acquaintance of several desperate characters. I went into their homes with "authority." Only in one instance did I and my companion meet with a really rough reception. A man named Balch threatened to "knife" us if we didn't get downstairs "quick."

We wanted to inquire after Master Balch, who had not been to school for days. A few days later we again knocked at Mr. Balch's door. We hoped that only his wife would be at home.

A rough-looking woman came to the door. We told her politely that we wanted to see Mr. Balch, her husband—which, of course, we didn't.

"Oh, *you* want 'im, do yer?" said the lady, recognizing the School Board officer. "Then yer can't 'ave 'im!"

"Why?"

"Why? 'Cos God's got 'im!"

She flung the door wide, and there on a bed lay the husband, dead.

The little boy who had failed to come to school grew up badly. Some years later he and two companions robbed and murdered in broad daylight a Dr. Kirwan, who was roaming about the Borough the worse for liquor.

I made the acquaintance of the captain of a local gang of young ruffians known as "The Forty Thieves."

One afternoon I was talking to a woman who lived in a room that looked on to a backyard in which a few nights previously a man had killed his wife.

The wife had, it seems, shouted "Murder! Help! Murder!" when she was attacked; but not one of the inmates of the house had gone to her assistance.

"Why on earth," I said to the woman, "didn't you do something when you heard that poor creature shouting for help?"

"Lor' love yer, sir!" was the reply, "if we was to get out o' bed every time we 'eard murder shouted in this 'ouse we'd be 'oppin in and out all night."

My experiences and adventures in the Borough started me upon what has been good-humouredly called "a life of crime," for from that moment the criminal became to me a fascinating study.

It was my pursuit of this study that earned me whatever reputation as a criminologist I may have, and brought me later on not only into close connexion, but frequently into close personal touch with the authors of some of the most sensational crimes of the day.

And it was my early experience of the criminal areas of the south of London that first brought me into friendly relationship with the authorities, and later on with the police, and this friendly relationship enabled me to acquire at first hand and from personal observation knowledge which has been invaluable to me as a journalist and of considerable service to me as a dramatist.

When I put a doss-house on the stage it was a real doss-house, and the characters I put in the doss-house were men and women I had met in a doss-house.

To get the doss-house in *The Trumpet Call*—the doss-house in which, it will be remembered, Mrs. Patrick Campbell met with a startling misadventure on the first night—I took the scenic artist and the producer into one of the worst in South London, and I introduced them to the company sitting round the coke fire as friends of mine who were forming an Anti-Landlord League.

But I had come into touch with a murder mystery long before I was a journalist and a dramatist.

Some time in the 'sixties my father had taken a house at Margate for us for the autumn holidays.

On the jetty, where I used to disport myself daily, I con-

stantly met two elaborately dressed and elaborately made-up middle-aged ladies who were arrayed in the most youthful manner.

They used to walk up and down the jetty simpering on either side of a tall, well-built, good-looking man, who always in the morning wore a yachting jacket and cap and white ducks.

The ladies were known as "The Canterbury Belles." They came from Canterbury, and the big, good-looking man was Mr. Frederick Hodges, the Lambeth distiller, who had a mania for fires and fire-engines.

He was as fond of fire-engines and travelling on them as the then Duke of Sutherland, who made Stafford House so famous.

It was at Stafford House that Chopin played to Queen Victoria, and it was when Queen Victoria bade the Duchess good-bye on this occasion that Her Majesty remarked, "Now I go from your palace to my house."

The Canterbury Belles were the Misses Hacker. Years after I had seen them so frequently at Margate one of them died, and the other came to London and took up her abode in apartments in a house in Euston Square, and the servant of the house was one Hannah Dobbs.

After living for some time at this house Miss Hacker disappeared, and all trace of her was lost.

A year or two after her disappearance her body was accidentally discovered in the coal-cellar.

As the result of police investigation the servant, Hannah Dobbs, was arrested and charged, but was acquitted.

Another murder in which I was greatly interested was that committed by Percy Mapleton Lefroy.

Lefroy, with the name of Percy Mapleton on his card, called upon me some time before he committed his crime. It will be remembered that he murdered a gentleman named Gold, who was travelling in the same carriage with him in a Brighton train.

Lefroy, a dramatist of sorts, came to see me about a play. I was out of town at the time, and the next thing I heard of Lefroy was that he had been to the *Era* office and seen my friend Mr. George Spencer Edwards.

Lefroy wrote the pantomime for the Croydon Theatre, and I have the book of it in my Criminal Museum.

When he was lying in the condemned cell he wrote the most passionate love-letters to a charming actress whom he had only seen on the stage.

According to one of his many confessions it was while he was on his way to Brighton to try and sell a play to the manager of the Brighton Theatre that Lefroy found himself in a railway carriage alone with Mr. Gold, and murdered and robbed him. He said that he had previously provided himself with a revolver in order to commit suicide if he failed to sell the play.

Lefroy is the only murderer I can recall who came to see me before committing his crime. I have had among my visitors three men who came to see me after they had been found guilty of murder and had served the commuted sentence.

Two are alive and living respectably; the third came to see me directly he was released.

I made an appointment to see him again, and I promised to try and get permission for him to emigrate, that he might reinstate himself in his profession. He did not keep the appointment. Shortly after our interview he was found dead in his bed, having taken poison.

Because for many years I spent a portion of my summer and autumn holidays at Malvern and I knew Dr. Gully, I was intensely interested in the Bravo case.

And so, for the matter of that, was everybody else. I shall not soon forget the wild rush there used to be for the *Evening Standard*, with its verbatim report of the proceedings on the days that Florence Bravo was undergoing the terrible inquisition into her "past."

Who gave her husband the poison which caused his death is still a frequently discussed question among criminologists. Sir George Lewis told me that he *knew*.

In the famous Penge case, where the Stauntons and Alice Rhodes were charged with the murder of Louis Staunton's wife, I defended Alice Rhodes vigorously in the Press. Mr. Justice Hawkins sentenced all four to death at midnight at the Old Bailey. It was one of the most terrible scenes ever witnessed in that grim Hall of Tragedies.

Charles Reade took the case up and sat on the steps of the Home Office until he had procured Alice Rhodes's release.

Within a very short time of being sentenced to be hanged by the neck, Alice Rhodes was behind the bar of a dining-hall run by E. T. Smith, who in his day had been a police constable, the lessee of Drury Lane Theatre, the founder of the Alhambra, the proprietor of a restaurant on premises which were Crockford's and are now the Devonshire Club, lessee of His Majesty's Opera House, the lessee of the Lyceum, proprietor of Cremorne Gardens and Highbury Barn, the proprietor of the *Sunday Times*, and lessee of Astley's Amphitheatre.

One of the Stauntons died in prison. The sentence had been commuted to penal servitude for life. The other two are spending the evening of their days in peaceful surroundings.

As a journalist I followed the Jack the Ripper crimes at close quarters. I had a personal interest in the matter, for my portrait, which appeared outside the cover of a sixpenny edition of my "Social Kaleidoscope," was taken to Scotland Yard by a coffee-stall keeper as the likeness of the assassin.

On the night of the double murder, or rather in the small hours of the morning, a man had drunk a cup of coffee at the stall. The stall-keeper noticed that he had blood on his shirt-cuffs. The coffee merchant said, looking at him keenly, "Jack the Ripper's about perhaps to-night."

"Yes," replied the man, "he is pretty lively just now, isn't he? You may hear of two murders in the morning." Then he walked away.

At dawn the bodies of two women murdered by the Ripper were found.

Passing a newsvendor's shop that afternoon the coffee-stall keeper saw my likeness outside the book.

"That's the man!" he said, and bought the book. He took it first to Dr. Forbes Winslow, who was writing letters to the papers on the Ripper crimes at the time.

Forbes Winslow, who knew me, told him it was absurd, but the man went off with the book to the Yard, and Forbes Winslow wrote to me and told me of the interview and the coffee-stall keeper's "mistake."

But it was quite a pardonable mistake. The redoubtable Ripper was not unlike me as I was at that time.

He was undoubtedly a doctor who had been in a lunatic asylum and had developed homicidal mania of a special kind.

Each of his murders was more maniacal than its predecessors, and the last was the worst of all.

After committing that he drowned himself. His body was found in the Thames after it had been in the river for nearly a month.

Had he been found alive there would have been no mystery about Jack the Ripper. The man would have been arrested and tried. But you can't try a corpse for a crime, however strong the suspicion may be.

And the authorities could not say, "This dead man was Jack the Ripper." The dead cannot defend themselves.

But there were circumstances which left very little doubt in the official mind as to the Ripper's identity.

I met Henry Wainwright twice. It was some time before he murdered Harriet Lane in the brush warehouse in White-chapel. He was a temperance lecturer and reciter, and was frequently engaged at mechanics' institutes to give an evening's entertainment.

I met him once at a lecture and once at a music-hall, and from friends of his after his arrest I learnt that they always looked upon him as a "good fellow."

Wainwright committed his crime cleverly, buried the body of his victim under the floor of a room in his warehouse, and there it would probably have remained undiscovered had he not had to give up the premises owing to financial difficulties in which he had become involved.

When he knew that he had to quit the premises he took the body up and made a parcel of various parts of it. He made the fatal mistake of taking the parcel out into the street with him and leaving it in charge of a young man while he went to fetch a cab.

The man's suspicions were aroused, he opened the corner of the parcel, and what he saw caused him to drop it with a cry of horror.

Wainwright came back with the cab, put the parcel into it, and drove off. Then the man, recovering his self-possession, rushed wildly after the cab, shouting, "Murder! Stop him! Stop him!"

Wainwright was hanged, but there were people who doubted whether he was the actual murderer. It was thought it might have been his brother who killed the girl at Wainwright's instigation. This brother, Thomas Wainwright, was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude as an accessory after the fact.

Wainwright did not seem to me at all the man to murder a young and attractive woman. It was his desire to keep well in the eyes of the world that caused him to get rid either directly or by the hand of another of the woman who was threatening to expose the double life which this "good fellow" was leading.

It is always well to have friends at court, and I have always had good friends at the Central Criminal Court. I have known most of the famous Old Bailey barristers for the past forty years.

I remember the days when the photograph of my old friends Montagu Williams and Douglas Straight, standing side by side, was as prominent in the shop windows as the Gaiety favourites used to be.

I don't suppose that many people now remember that Montagu Williams, when he was an actor, played the counsel for the defence in the trial scene of *Effie Deans* at Astley's in 1863.

In the days of the Serjeants-at-Law, Serjeant Ballantine was as popular a personality as any romantic actor of the period. The names of Serjeant Parry, Serjeant Sleigh, and Serjeant Cox were household words, and Serjeant Cox was the founder of a number of periodicals which were highly prosperous in his day and are still valuable properties.

Ballantine I knew personally. I met him first at Bonn when he was on his way to Wiesbaden. He came to see his son Walter, who was a fellow-student of mine. Later on I used to see him at Evans's Supper Rooms and in theatreland.

Ballantine made his first big success in the prosecution of Muller for the murder of Mr. Briggs on the North London Railway. Muller was magnificently defended by Serjeant Parry, but the facts "kicked the beam" and Muller died on it.

Ballantine received the record fee of £10,000 for defending the Gaekwar of Baroda. He made a vast sum of money at

the Bar, but he got rid of it with both hands, and died a poor man.

Sir Henry Hawkins was offered the brief to defend the Gaekwar of Baroda, but declined it and suggested Ballantine. When the latter returned from India, Hawkins said to him in the hearing of others, "Well, I hope you have paid all your debts."

"No, I haven't," said Ballantine. "I stopped in Egypt for a bit and had bad luck at the races at Cairo and at the tables at Alexandria."

Hawkins almost flew at him. "Well, if I had been in your shoes and good luck had pulled me straight, I should never have frittered away the spoils *donkey-racing* in Egypt!"

I have listened again and again to the deadly cross-examination of Mr. Henry Hawkins, and I have seen Mr. Justice Hawkins and his canine companion in court together many a time and oft.

I sat not at the feet but at the back of Sir Charles Mathews, now the Director of Public Prosecutions—the Swami called him "the Apostle Mathews"—from the time he made his debut in the old-fashioned court with the window through which the prisoner in the dock would sometimes gaze so wistfully at the blue sky and the old tree where the birds sang gaily their song of liberty and the joy of life, and I witnessed his final triumph as counsel for the Crown in the new court that might have been lifted bodily out of a modern French drama.

I watched Sir Frank Lockwood make his sketches in court, sketches that are so "strictly prohibited" to-day.

I listened while Dr. Kenealy, in defending the Tichborne Claimant in the criminal case, shook the dewdrops from his mane, and while Sir John Coleridge favoured the Claimant's witnesses in the civil case with the ever-to-be-famous "Would you be surprised to hear?"

I saw the last of the "Claimant." He died in lodgings in Marylebone, and one Sunday morning I sat alone by his side in the Marylebone Mortuary and took a final look at the familiar features before the coffin lid was screwed down. On that lid he was described as "Sir Roger Charles Doughty Tichborne."



MR. SERJEANT BALLANTINE

The methods of modern counsel are very different from the brow-beating tactics of Dickens's days. Mr. C. F. Gill could cross-examine an obviously hostile witness with stately courtesy though deadly effect, and he and Mr. Grain had, as have Mr. Bodkin and Mr. Muir to-day, the "gentle" art of breaking down the defence of the man who did not want to be hanged.

How admirable a counsel for the defence Mr. Marshall Hall has proved himself from the now distant days to the year that saw "Justice as usual" administered to the Bluebeard of the Bath is part of the history of the Old Bailey.

I heard Banner Oakley, of the Co-operative Credit Bank, sentenced to five years' penal servitude. He managed to secure quite a considerable sum by offering ten per cent. for all money deposited at his bank. When he was arrested he had a hymn-book in his black bag.

I heard a good deal of the evidence in the case of Mme. Rachel—her name was Leverson—who promised her female dupes to make them beautiful for ever. It was evidence that set the whole world laughing, but Mme. Rachel did not even smile when she got five years.

I heard Jabez Balfour sentenced, and I have the gold watch with an inscription to the effect that it was presented to him on his twenty-first birthday. It stopped for the first time since it had been in his possession at the moment the jury brought in a verdict of guilty.

By a curious coincidence I had just looked at that gold watch to refresh my memory as I was writing these lines when the evening newspapers were left at my house, and I opened the *Evening News* to read of the sudden death of Jabez Balfour in a railway carriage.

I heard Dr. Whitmarsh sentenced to death for the murder of Alice Bayley by an illegal operation, and Dr. Whitmarsh told me many years afterwards, when he had served the time to which his sentence had been commuted, that he lay in the condemned cell at night and imagined he could hear the workmen making ready the gallows on which he was to be hanged.

I followed the evidence against Mrs. Pearcey, "Mary Eleanor Wheeler," accused of having at her house in Kentish Town

murdered Mrs. Hogg and Mrs. Hogg's baby, and I have somewhere a copy of the Spanish paper in which, at the condemned woman's request, this advertisement was inserted : " M. E. C. P. Last wish of M. E. W. Have not betrayed."

James Canham Read, who murdered Florence Dennis at Southend because he was leading a treble life, was tried at Chelmsford, and I was not present, but I knew a great deal about Canham Read and his career.

He was a particularly cool customer, and almost to the last retained his complete self-possession.

Every day during his trial he ordered ham sandwiches to be sent to him, and he particularly impressed upon the officer entrusted with the order that the ham should be cut from the knuckle end.

I have been present at most of the famous trials in the "new" Old Bailey, but these are as fresh in the general memory as they are in mine.

CHAPTER XVII

IN the year that I was born two great singers made their first appearance in London. One was Jenny Lind and the other was Marietta Alboni.

Jenny Lind married the famous pianist and composer Otto Goldschmidt, and retired from the operatic stage in 1851, so that I do not suppose I ever heard her sing. But there were two pictures that hung in my bedroom when I was a little boy, and I have never forgotten them.

One was a picture of Jenny Lind as "The Daughter of the Regiment," and the other was a picture of Alboni in *La Cenerentola*.

Because I looked at these pictures the last thing every night, and because they were the first things that greeted my waking eyes they roused my childish curiosity.

Because my people were great theatre-goers and loved the opera I used for years after Jenny Lind had retired to hear stories of her marvellous gifts, and of the wild sensation her first appearance in London had created.

It was in the year 1847, the year that I was born, that Jenny Lind made her first appearance in London at Her Majesty's, and took the town by storm.

Forty years later, in October 1887, my mother was staying at Malvern, and I was on a visit to her. On Sunday morning I strolled away among the hills in the direction of the British Camp, and the result of that Sunday morning walk was that I was the first person in the world, outside her own family and her immediate attendants, to know that the soul of the sweetest singer of our time had passed away.

And I gave my experience in the *Referee*.

Last Sunday I spent at Malvern, and as the morning was a beautiful one I set out for the hills and got as far

as the British Camp, the great hill on which the Britons under Caractacus made their last stand against the Romans. As I stood on the height and looked out far over miles and miles of forest and plain the sight was glorious; but though far away in the distance like a streak of silver in the sunlight I could see the Bristol Channel and also the spires of churches in Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, and Herefordshire, yet I had eyes for one place only, and that was a place which lay right at the foot of the hill on which I stood.

It nestled among lofty trees all glowing with autumn tints. It was a lonely, lovely, romantic spot—just the place where one would think some one who had seen all the gay glories of the world would come to to spend the evening of life in rest and peace. And it was indeed the home of one who had tasted all the joys the world had to give.

I was looking down upon the romantic home of Jenny Lind. But my thoughts were sad, for within that sweet nest the “Nightingale” lay mute and motionless and nigh her end. All around was still and beautiful, the lovely peace of a Sabbath morning was upon hill and dale.

My thoughts wandered far away to the great cities and splendid theatres and opera-houses. I saw the diva with the great world at her feet; I heard the roar of voices and the thunder of applause, and then I let the vision pass away and turned and looked at the little nest far from the haunts of men—so peaceful that no sound of voice or footstep broke the silence of the hills and dales—so lonely that the eye wandered far and near and could see no sign of life.

And it was there that the world-famous songstress, the glorious Jenny Lind, was passing slowly to the golden songland which lies beyond human ken.

And even as I watched the blinds were slowly drawn to shut out the light of day.

Jenny Lind was dead.

A few days later I received a charming letter from Jenny Lind's son:

“ November 9, 1877.

“ DEAR SIR,—Although I am personally unknown to you, I cannot refrain from writing to thank you for the very kind way in which you have written about my dear mother, Madame Jenny Lind Goldschmidt. On that lovely Sunday morning which you described, we who loved her were assembled in that little house under the Malvern Hills and heard from the doctors summoned for consultation that her end was near—how near we now all know.

“ Yours faithfully,

“ WALTER C. GOLDSCHMIDT.”

On the morning that I set out for the last home of Jenny Lind I had said good-bye at the Belle Vue Hotel to the members of a concert party who had sung in Malvern the previous evening. Among them was Michael Maybrick, who in professional life was Stephen Adams, and who was the brother of the Mr. Maybrick whose death brought the fair neck of his widow perilously near to the fatal noose—and another of the party was Madame Antoinette Sterling, whom I met then for the first time, and who afterwards sent me many charming letters, and on one occasion sang for me—or rather for the *Referee* Children's Fund—at a concert given at the National Sporting Club. I shall not soon forget the amusement with which the famous contralto listened to the songs of the music-hall stars. I suppose it was the only occasion on which Madame Antoinette Sterling appeared on a programme with the Brothers Griffiths.

In Malvern the house in which Jenny Lind died was known as “ Johnson's Folly.”

Johnson was the nephew of a Lord Mayor of London. When he took possession of Wind's Point he had £15,000 a year. He spent every farthing, and died poor.

His mania was inventing extraordinary things. To improve the view from his house he attempted to remove one of the Malvern Hills. The house was a most eccentric arrangement, whirligigs, queer doors, and chimneys of his own design. He would tread on a board and that caused the windows to open or shut and the shutters to open or close, as the case might be.

Among his inventions was a patent costume. You put

your hands through a hole in your bedding and your arms through sleeves attached to the bedding, pulled a string, and you were fully dressed.

There was another Swedish nightingale who charmed our ears in the days of long ago. She was the daughter of a poor forester, and was born in his hut in the woods of Wexio.

The little girl had taught herself to play the fiddle, and one day she and her young brother went barefooted to the village fair and played and sang some of the national songs. The result of the concert was three-halfpence.

They were so elated with their success that they tramped on from the village fair to a near town where a much larger fair was being held, and there the little Swedish girl sang her songs and accompanied herself on the fiddle.

A gentleman standing in the crowd exclaimed, "What a lovely voice this child has!" And this gentleman—he was a judge, and a good judge, too—gave the little girl sixpence, and the rest of the bystanders contributed twopence.

And then the children trotted back home with the, to them, fabulous sum of ninepence halfpenny in their possession.

It was the foundation of the little girl's fortune. The gentleman found out where she lived, went to the hut, and persuaded the little girl's parents to let him take charge of her musical education.

When I saw her she was a beautiful woman, slim and tall, with lovely fair hair and marvellous grey-blue eyes. She was the ideal Marguerite and the ideal Ophelia.

Forty years have passed since London first fell under the spell of her enchantment. I have but to close my eyes to see her as the flaxen-haired Marguerite now.

The little girl who left her father's hut to play and sing at the fair, and who made ninepence halfpenny by her first professional performance, was Christine Nilsson.

I have said that thanks to the Italian gentleman who lived near Leicester Square I met some of the most famous operatic artists of the 'sixties and 'seventies. And thanks to the Italian gentleman we had a box for the opera on many occasions during the season.

I met Mario first in Paris. My father had taken a flat for

the family for two months in the Rue Neuve St. Augustin. It was in 1867 and I was twenty then.

Our Italian friend had accompanied us. He put up at the Hôtel de Bade, and there one day he invited me to lunch and took me afterwards to call on Mario.

I have always remembered the circumstances because we were kept waiting in the salon for some considerable time before the great singer appeared. Mario was in the habit of keeping everybody waiting. He was never known to be punctual to an appointment, and he even arrived late when he had been invited to Windsor Castle.

But my Italian friend was indignant at the delay. When twenty minutes had passed and we were still waiting he exclaimed: "Ah, it is too much! The damn fellow keep me waiting while he put on his orders. Why does the fool do that when I have see him in his bath?"

Mario, though the son of a distinguished father, was at one time in such poor circumstances that he lodged where seven people slept in a room. And he was one of the seven.

Mario and the mother of his children, Mme. Grisi, sometimes earned as much as eighteen thousand pounds in a single year, but at the end he was again so poor that Mr. Arthur Chappell got up a grand concert for his benefit.

Mario was a terrific smoker, and even when he was singing at the opera his servant stood at the wings to take the glowing cigar from his master's mouth when the artist had to go on the stage.

It was while we were staying in Paris that year, by the by, that our Italian friend got us seats for the first night of a new opéra bouffe by a brilliant musician, who called himself Offenbach, but whose name was Levy. It was a triumph for all concerned, and especially for Mademoiselle Hortense Schneider, who played La Grande Duchesse.

But I must not begin to tell Paris stories. These are reminiscences of London.

My fifty years' reminiscences of Paris, where I was at one time as faithful a theatre-goer as I was in London, must wait until I have time to write them. They go back to the days when Déjazet was still a popular idol, when Sarah Bernhardt

was a slim *ingénue*, when Judic was a joy, and Therese was achieving her early triumphs.

I knew the Italian opera and its stars in those days pretty well, but I knew the English opera artists better.

I was a constant attendant at the English opera when it was run under the Pyne and Harrison management. We had English composers then who could produce serious opera and light opera of the higher class, composers who believed in "tune," and wrote for the people's pleasure as well as for the critics' praise.

And there was a great English singer whom I knew better than any of the foreign stars. His name was John Reeves, and it was John Reeves for a good many years until he developed into Sims Reeves, and the evolution of the Sims is interesting.

As plain John Reeves he studied music, then he became a medical student. He very soon grew tired of it and turned to the stage.

He made his first appearance in London at the Grecian Theatre, and his name in the programme was "Mr. Johnson." Then he got a singing part in Macready's productions at Drury Lane, and he became John Reeves. About this time a lady vocalist suggested to him that he should put the name of Sims in front of his Reeves, as it would make it more euphonious.

When he next appeared at Drury Lane Jullien was the manager and Hector Berlioz was the *chef d'orchestre*. As Mr. Sims Reeves the young tenor made a huge success, and never looked back until age robbed him of his voice, and then evil times came.

A great benefit was got up for him by Mr. Arthur Chappell, and he was granted a Civil List pension.

I met Sims Reeves three or four times at various hotels when he was on tour in the provinces, and in this way came to know him personally.

Whenever he travelled his devoted first wife was most solicitous for his health. She wanted if possible to avoid the "severe cold" which interfered so frequently with the tenor's concert engagements. Everything that the tenor used in the way of linen, including table-cloths, serviettes, and towels, was

specialty carried and specially aired under the personal supervision of Mrs. Sims Reeves.

The devoted wife died in 1895, and Sims Reeves some time afterwards married a fine-looking young woman who was his pupil.

It was rather a shock to the worshippers of the famous tenor to find Mrs. Sims Reeves playing later on in a provincial pantomime, and exciting some comment by the nature of her costume.

I wonder how many opera-goers remember the night when Sims Reeves, playing Robin Hood, vaulted lightly over the garden wall and struck the fair Maid Marian—quite by accident—a violent blow on the nose which caused it to bleed freely.

It was the first time Maid Marian had shed her blood for Robin Hood, but the love duet was duly sung, though Maid Marian had to keep her handkerchief well in hand during its progress.

The last time I heard Sims Reeves it was at a Sunday afternoon concert at the Queen's Hall. Alas, he was a name in the programme and nothing more.

I have told the story of the evolution of the Sims as the famous tenor's middle name. It was an evolution by which I was later on personally affected.

After I had come into the limelight I frequently had the Reeves added to my Sims, and this used to happen long after the famous singer had passed into the Great Silence.

I was invited to the complimentary luncheon given to Mr. de Sousa, the celebrated American conductor, when he first appeared in London. On the card placed on the luncheon table to indicate the seat allotted to me I was astonished to find the name of a dead man. My seat at the de Sousa luncheon at the Trocadero was allotted to "Mr. Sims Reeves."

CHAPTER XVIII

HENRY BROUGHAM FARNIE, who when I first knew him was the editor of a musical paper owned by Messrs. Cramer, was responsible at one time for nearly all the opéra bouffe and comic opera imported into this country from Paris.

All the Offenbach operas crossed the Channel in opéra bouffe days, but his masterpiece, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, only came to us in English quite lately.

I saw it on its production in Paris in 1880, and I urged Farnie again and again to do an English version, but he always told me that it would not suit the English taste. How mistaken he was my friend Mr. Robert Courtneidge has triumphantly proved at the Shaftesbury.

Farnie's version of *Geneviève de Brabant*, produced in 1871, took all theatrical London up Pentonville Hill to the Philharmonic, once a music-hall run by Sam Adams, and afterwards by Charles Head, a bookmaker, and Emily Soldene as Drogon, Marius as Charles Martel, and Bury and Marshall as the two gendarmes became the talk of the town.

Farnie, in order to be near the new home of opéra bouffe, where he contemplated further productions, took rooms in the City Road.

But he was busier at the West End than he was at Islington, and half the theatres of London succumbed in turn to the charm of light opera.

Violet Cameron! What happy memories old playgoers have of her in *La Mascotte*, *Boccaccio*, *Rip van Winkle*, *Falka*, *The Sultan of Mocha*, and *Morocco Bound*.

Florence St. John was always one of light opera's most charming exponents. In 1868 she was singing with a diorama. In 1875 she was singing at the Oxford Music Hall as Florence Leslie. Then she was with the Blanche Cole and Rose Hersee

Opera Companies, and in 1878 she came to the Globe Theatre as Germaine in *Les Cloches de Corneville*.

What old playgoer does not remember charming "Jack" St. John in *Madame Favart*, in *Les Manteaux Noirs*, as Boulotte in *Barbe-Bleu*, in *Nell Gwynne*, and as Bettina in *La Mascotte*.

Both Florence St. John and Violet Cameron came later to the Gaiety to play in *Faust Up-to-date*, by Henry Pettitt and myself. But that is a later reminiscence.

The Mansell Brothers—their name was Maitland and they came from Athlone—made a huge success at the Lyceum with Hervé's *Chilperic* and *Little Faust* in 1870, and Jenny Lee, who was afterwards to win undying fame as "Jo," was in *Le Petit Faust* a cheeky little crossing-sweeper.

There was a beautiful lady named Cornélie d'Anka in the Mansell Company, and one night Dick Mansell performed a daring feat.

Some unwelcome admirer presented a pistol at the head of the fair lady. Forward sprang the gallant Dick and wrested the deadly weapon from the ruffian's grasp.

It was whispered some time afterwards that the deadly weapon that the aggressor held aloft was really a black pocket-book.

There was a time when Arthur Roberts, the gay commander of *H.M.S. Spooferies*, was the comedian *par excellence* in musical comedy. I remember him at the old Middlesex Music Hall in the early 'seventies, and I have a happy recollection of his Dr. Syntax in *Mother Goose* at the Lane.

At the Avenue I remember sitting one night in a box with Henry Labouchere and Mrs. Labouchere and Walter Ballantine, who was then M.P. for Coventry. We had dined at the House of Commons, and Ballantine had taken us afterwards to see Roberts. I fancy the piece was *La Vie*.

Labby was one of the few people who could not or would not see the popular comedian's humour.

When *Blue-Eyed Susan*, by Pettitt and myself, was put on in '92 at the Prince of Wales's, Arthur Roberts was the Captain Crosstree, and I remember the mixed feelings with which I regarded his attempt in the middle of a sentimental scene to light his pipe from a beacon on the back-cloth.

They were joyous days at the Strand in '73, when Farnie gave us *Nemesis*, and Marius was in his glory vowing vengeance on his enemy with a toy cannon which he pulled across the stage with a piece of string.

The Alhambra early in the 'seventies ran big spectacular musical shows, of which the best remembered are perhaps *The Black Crook* and *Le Roi Carotte*, and Kate Santley was the bright particular star.

And there was a Miss Rose Bell, and the Santleyites and the Bellites made war upon each other in the gallery o' nights.

And there were the John Baum days, with the ladies' glove stalls at the back of the promenade. But that is another story.

At the Alhambra they gave us *La Belle Hélène* and *La Jolie Parfumeuse*. At the Opera Comique we had *La Fille de Madame Angot* and *Orphée aux Enfers*, and W. S. Gilbert and Frederic Clay gave us *Princess Toto* at the Strand, and Kate Santley played the Princess, and it was that which brought me some years afterwards to the Royalty with my first comic opera, *The Merry Duchess*.

It was when Gilbert and Sullivan came to the Opera Comique that the English librettist and the English composer began to come to their own once more.

Frederic Clay, the composer, who had won golden laurels with his songs, "She wandered down the Mountain Side," "Sands o' Dee," and "I'll sing thee Songs of Araby," and had carried off the musical honours in *Princess Toto*, wanted to write another comic opera.

In 1882 Miss Kate Santley, who was at the Royalty, sent for me and asked me if I would work with Clay.

The result of the collaboration was *The Merry Duchess*, which was produced at the Royalty on April 3, 1883. Clay's music was delightfully tuneful, and the *Duchess* ran her merry career for many months.

Kate Santley and Henry Ashley kept us laughing all the time, and Kitty Munroe was as charming as she was a merry Duchess, and was wonderful in her wooing of her favourite jockey, played by Mr. F. Gregory. There was a young actor in the cast named Fred Kerr, who played a small part.

When I first went to the Royalty in '79 Augustus Harris was the acting manager, and he became the lessee of Drury Lane.

When I went to the Royalty with *The Merry Duchess*, the acting manager was Cecil Raleigh, and some years afterwards he was helping to write the dramas at old Drury. I waited for thirty years, but I got to the Lane at last, though it was with pantomime and not with drama.

When I next met Cecil Raleigh it was at the Pelican Club one Sunday night. It was the night of the fight between Jim Smith and Peter Jackson.

Raleigh was then the secretary of the club, which was being run on full-dress lines by my old friend Ernest Wells.

I left the club about four o'clock in the morning, and Raleigh left with me, and we walked up Regent Street together.

From that 4 A.M. "walk and talk" in Regent Street ensued a collaboration which lasted for a good many years, and resulted in *The Grey Mare*, with a lovely lying part for Charles Hawtrey, *The Guardsman*, at the Court, with Arthur Cecil, Weedon Grossmith, Ellaline Terris, Caroline Hill, and Isabel Ellison, who afterwards became Mrs. Raleigh, in the cast; *Fanny*, at the Strand, *Little Christopher Columbus*, at the Lyric, with May Yohe in the name part and Ivan Caryll's music a triumph of tunefulness, and *Uncle John* at the Vaudeville.

In one of our plays there was a charming young actress. Some years afterwards she was found lying dazed and apparently destitute among the tramps who bivouacked in Regent's Park and were known as the "Park gipsies."

But let me return to my first musical composer, Frederic Clay. That also, alas, is a story that becomes a tragedy at the finish, and it is a story in which the Alhambra Theatre is in a way concerned.

My earliest recollection of the Alhambra is the black eye I got there during one of the rowdy rushes that used to be a feature of the 'Varsity Boat Race night.

The famous Frederick Strange was at that time the presiding genius of the establishment. Strange had been a waiter in the chop room at Simpson's. He took up a refreshment

contract at the Crystal Palace, made a lot of money, and took the Alhambra from the first proprietor, Mr. William Wild, who had introduced Leotard to the British public.

Strange came on the scene in 1866, and made ballet the great feature of the Alhambra entertainment.

I met Strange frequently when he was apparently one of the most successful amusement caterers in London, and I have often stopped to gaze at the splendid pair of high-steppers he used to drive in his phaeton, and at the delightful danseuse who was generally to be seen seated in the phaeton by the side of her admiring manager.

The last time I met the once dashing impresario he was the steward on board a penny steamer on the Thames.

The Alhambra in time became a limited company with directors of credit and renown who sat nightly in a directors' box.

The late Maharajah Duleep Singh was often the guest of the directors at that time. He was the devoted admirer of a pretty young lady in the ballet.

I met once or twice in the later years a nice old lady who was the mamma of the danseuse, and who always referred to the object of the Maharajah's admiration as "my daughter, the princess."

The princess one day presented her mamma with a lovely sealskin coat which was rather out of fashion.

Mamma accepted it and wore it home, but it was a long way to Camberwell from the West End, and mamma, when she got to the south side, found herself hungry.

Somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Walworth Road she passed a fried fish shop, felt tempted, entered, and sat down. The cooking of the fish and chips had heated the atmosphere to an extent which made the wearing of a sealskin coat undesirable, so the princess's mamma took it off and laid it down beside her.

When she had finished her fish she strolled out into the street, but, not being accustomed to luxuries, she forgot to pick up the hundred-guinea gift which her daughter had that afternoon bestowed upon her. When she realized what had happened she went back to the fried fish shop, but the princessly gift had disappeared.

When I heard the story from the lips of the lady herself my memory wandered back to the days when the late Maharajah was such a faithful habitué of the Alhambra.

Everybody knows what the can-can is to-day, but it was first introduced into England by Mlle. Finette, who made a tremendous sensation with it at the Alhambra in '66.

Later on we had a young lady who did another sort of can-can and was popularly known as "Wiry Sal."

One of the earliest sketches, a form of entertainment which is now part of almost every music-hall programme, was given at the Alhambra in '66, and was called "Where's the Police?" and the characters were played by Messrs. d'Auban, Warde, Fred Evans, and Miss Warde and Mrs. Evans.

The piece was produced at the Alhambra by John Hollingshead, and a summons was immediately issued.

The magistrate decided against the management. A fine of £20 a night, full penalty, was inflicted, and the piece was ordered to be withdrawn.

Although a Parliamentary Committee soon afterwards recommended that music-halls should be allowed to play short dramatic pieces, over half a century elapsed before the performance of such plays in halls of variety was legalized.

My personal connexion with the Alhambra began much later on. After *The Merry Duchess* Frederic Clay and his collaborator became very close friends.

We were in Paris in December '82, sitting outside the Café de la Paix at the green hour, when we opened the *Daily Telegraph* and read that the Alhambra had been burnt down.

Soon afterwards we had a commission to write a spectacular fairy opera for the new Alhambra, and on December 3, '83, *The Golden Ring* was produced, with Marion Hood as the leading lady and J. G. Taylor as the principal comedian.

The fates were not altogether propitious. The stage hands let down the wrong cloth in the middle of the great transformation scene of the Fisheries Exhibition to the open sea.

On the second night Clay and I went into the theatre, and Clay was very much annoyed when he was told that a band that he particularly required to be on the stage would be cut out.

Georges Jacobi, the old conductor, had left, and Jules

Rivière, who had been the *chef d'orchestre* in the old days, had returned, but for some reason a good deal of extra work had fallen on Clay.

After the show we walked into the Strand and met D'Oyly Carte, and stopped for a few minutes chatting with him. Then we turned into Bow Street.

Opposite the police-station Clay suddenly reeled and fell heavily against me.

I managed to hold him up and called for help. An inspector and two constables came over from the station, and between us we carried poor Freddy across the road and laid him on the floor in the inspector's room.

Then I sent a special messenger to the house of his brother Cecil. Cecil Clay came quickly, put his brother in a cab, and took him home.

That night poor Freddy Clay had a second stroke. For a long time he was unable to move. Then he got a little better and wrote me one or two pathetic little letters in pencil with his left hand. He was now a hopeless invalid, and knew that his life's work was done.

The last letter I had from him was brief and sad. It was on the anniversary of his seizure, and this was all he wrote: "Fatal day. Poor Freddy."

Soon afterwards he was found dead in his bath. I had lost my dearest friend, and the world had lost an artist who would have given it many charming and tuneful songs.

We laid him to rest in Brompton Cemetery, and the chief mourners were his brothers, Arthur Sullivan, Squire Bancroft, and myself.

CHAPTER XIX

ONE of my earliest visits to the Adelaide Gallery after it became a café under the direction of the Gattis and the Monicos was when I was still at Hanwell College. Three of us went out of bounds one afternoon and walked from Hanwell Londonwards.

My early recollections of Gatti's are of chess and draughts at the little marble tables all day long, and a big billiard saloon with any number of tables down below.

In those days the Brothers Gatti, Agostino and Stefano, used to sit at a big serving counter in the corner near the entrance in Agar Street, and of an evening Tommy Foster, of the *Weekly Times*, was frequently to be seen sitting with them.

Tommy Foster, a little man with a benevolent smile, was faithful to the Gatti management to the very end.

He died suddenly in the dress circle of the Adelphi on a first night.

Quite early in the days of the Adelaide Gallery as a café the Gattis and the Monicos dissolved partnership. The Monicos opened the establishment at Piccadilly Circus which bears their name, and the Gattis became interested in various theatrical enterprises.

They ran promenade concerts at Covent Garden, and they produced pantomimes there.

They became the proprietors of the Adelphi and produced dramas of the good wholesome Adelphi type, and Henry Pettitt wrote *Taken from Life* for them with the great Clerkenwell Prison explosion scene in it. That was in December 1881, and Charles Warner was their leading man.

Until the end of 1882 I was under contract to the Princess's, and had followed *The Lights o' London* with *The Romany Rye*, a play of which a critic who meant to be complimentary said

that we "had brought the scent of the gipsies over the footlights."

I hope we didn't. But the gipsies were real gipsies, and to the best of my recollection were found for us "somewhere in England" by my friend Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, who was then working on *The Silver King* with which Wilson Barrett had arranged to follow *The Romany Rye*.

When it was announced that Henry Arthur Jones was coming to the Princess's, the Gattis came to me and offered to provide me with a new home at the Adelphi. They had an unfulfilled contract with Pettitt, and suggested that they should ask Pettitt to waive it and that he and I should collaborate in a play for production in the autumn of 1883.

I agreed, and commenced a theatrical partnership, which was continued for many years with excellent commercial results, both to ourselves and to the Adelphi.

Henry Pettitt had the "gift of the theatre" in a remarkable degree. He was a master of the art of construction, and financially as successful as any author of his time. When he died he left nearly £50,000, and I remember the astonishment of a learned judge who had to be consulted with regard to the administration of the dead author's theatrical properties.

Henry Pettitt was the son of a civil engineer, but he drifted about until he found his *métier* in melodrama.

He had been agent in advance to a circus company, and business manager of an opera company that toured "the smalls."

He played the "fiery Tybalt" in an equestrian performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, and died so far down the stage that, as the curtain descended, the corpse had to rise hurriedly and die again "higher up."

Once on Christmas Day in one of the small towns the opera company was lodged at an inn. But business was bad, the ghost had not walked, and the landlord of the inn, knowing how matters stood, was not inclined to supply the Christmas dinner for a hungry company of Thespians on credit.

Pettitt envisaged the situation and was struck by an idea. He strolled off to the lodgings in the town where the manager and his wife had settled themselves comfortably.

He got to the house about two o'clock. The manager had gone out to get an appetizer. The wife had cooked a fine goose for the early Christmas dinner, and was placing it on the table ready for the return of her lord. She went into the kitchen to dish up the vegetables. Pettitt saw his chance. He scribbled on a piece of paper: "The Company request the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. ——— to dinner at the ——— Inn. Roast goose at 2.45 sharp. Please bring your own vegetables."

Then he picked up the dish and bolted out of the house and ran as fast as his long legs could carry him to the inn.

He put the goose on the table before the astonished company and said: "There you are, boys and girls. We'll keep it hot till the boss and the missis come. I've invited them to join us."

And the boss and his better half did come, and they brought the vegetables, and the boss paid for the beer, and it was a merry party at the old inn that Christmas afternoon.

There was a lot of quiet humour about Henry Pettitt.

He once wrote me a little letter, and this is all that the letter contained: "DEAR SIMS,—Does collaboration with you include cleaning your boots?"

I am afraid I *was* inclined to be trying in those days. But I suffered with dyspepsia and insomnia, and that is a combination which does not make for patient gentleness.

In the Ranks was produced at the Adelphi on the evening of October 6, 1883, with Charles Warner as the hero, Isabel Bateman as the heroine, Mary Rorke as Barbara Herrick, and William Herbert, as Captain Holcroft, had the love interest, and Mrs. Leigh, E. W. Garden, and Clara Jecks played the low comedy scenes in the fine old Adelphi fashion. John Beauchamp made a great character of the hop-picker, and dear old John Ryder was Colonel Winter.

Ryder, one of the soundest actors of his time, lived in the suburbs, and liked to get home early.

In *In the Ranks* he was supposed to be murdered in the first act. But he came to life again in the fifth act. With all the vigour of which he was capable Jack Ryder implored me to let him be really killed.

"You see," he said, "if I'm really murdered I can get

home at nine; if I'm only dangerously wounded I have to sit in my dressing-room for two hours to recover and come on for a short scene, and then I don't get home till midnight. For goodness' sake, my dear boy, polish me off in the first act."

On the first night of *In the Ranks* the foliage in the big "Outside the Church" scene caught fire, and the flames looked like spreading.

Warner was playing in a front scene, and we managed to let him know that he was to keep on making love to his bride till we had torn down the burning border.

And he did. It was one of the few occasions on which the authors of a play have been grateful to the leading man for gagging.

Mr. Bruce Smith, though it was not his scene, did heroic work in cutting the flaming foliage away. We were within an inch of disaster that night.

That delightful actor J. D. Beveridge will remember it, for we stood side by side and watched the progress of a fire behind the scenes of which not a soul in front of the curtain had, thank goodness, the slightest suspicion.

On the last night of *In the Ranks* at the Adelphi—it had run over a year—the curtain absolutely refused to come down.

Was it an omen?

It looked like it, for the drama, *The Last Chance*, which succeeded it in 1885, and which I wrote, was not a success.

The production of *The Last Chance* was associated with many unfortunate incidents.

Richard Barker, who had been remarkably successful with the Gilbert and Sullivan operas and with the Sims and Clay *Merry Duchess*, was at my request engaged by the Brothers Gatti to produce it.

About a week before production and just when the important final rehearsals with scenes and props were due, Barker had a bad breakdown.

At the dress rehearsal I discovered to my horror that the scenic artist had painted peacocks' feathers over the chimney-piece in a room in a Derbyshire inn.

I had never known peacocks' feathers bring anything but

bad luck on the stage, and I was very unhappy. James Fernandez and Charles Glenney, who were in the play, tried to cheer me up, but I went home that night feeling anything but sanguine.

On the first night Charles Warner, the hero, when he was supposed to be starving in a garret, lifted his hands to heaven and exclaimed: "Our last farthing gone; starvation stares us in the face!"

Unfortunately Warner was wearing a diamond ring which sparkled gaily in the limelight.

So when he said that he was starving a voice from the gallery shouted, "Why don't you pawn your diamond ring?"

And that settled the situation—and in a sense settled the play.

You couldn't get an Adelphi audience to sympathize with a hero who wailed about his starving wife and wore a fifty-pound diamond ring.

The Last Chance did not last long, but a few months later a nautical play by Pettitt and myself was put up.

It was called *The Harbour Lights*. William Terriss—we called him "Breezy Bill," and he was an ideal naval lieutenant—played the hero, and Miss Jessie Milward the heroine, and *The Harbour Lights* beamed brightly for 540 consecutive performances, which was a record.

After *The Harbour Lights* I went back to Wilson Barrett, who had taken the Olympic, and we revived *The Lights o' London* there with Miss Winifred Emery as Bess—what a charming, sympathetic Bess she was!—and there we produced *The Golden Ladder*.

Pettitt in the meantime had collaborated with my friend and former partner, Sydney Grundy, and *The Bells of Haslemere* rang and *The Union Jack* waved at the Adelphi.

Pettitt and I came together for three or four more Adelphi dramas. In one of them, *The Silver Falls*, which was produced in 1888, Olga Nethersole was the heroine.

Then Pettitt went out and Robert Buchanan came into partnership with me, and our first play, *The English Rose*, was produced on August 2, 1890. Then came *The Trumpet Call*, which was produced on August 1, 1891, and was a great success, with Leonard Boyne and Elizabeth Robins as the

hero and heroine, Lionel Rignold as a travelling showman, with Mrs. Patrick Campbell as Astrea, his clairvoyant.

But before I come to the Buchanan days—and nights—and the story of one of the most remarkable personalities of his time, let me say a word or two about my lifelong friend and brilliant workfellow, Sydney Grundy.

Sydney Grundy was a barrister, the son of a Manchester alderman. He gave up his practice, left Manchester, and came to London to improve his position as a playwright.

We met first at the back of the dress circle at the Royalty on the first night of *Crutch and Toothpick*.

Grundy was introduced to me by some one, we chatted and became friends, and exchanged views about our stage prospects.

I had an idea for a Society comedy—or rather a semi-Society comedy. So had Grundy. We put the two ideas together and wrote a play which was eventually produced at the Globe in September 1883. It was called *The Glass of Fashion*, in which Alice Lingard and Carlotta Leclerq, with a small Yorkshire terrier named Horace, scored instant successes. Prince Borowski was played by Beerbohm Tree, and Peg O'Reilly by Lottie Venne. John L. Shine was a self-made millionaire, a brewer, and there was a Society journalist who collected piquant Society "pars" for the Society journal, *The Glass of Fashion*, which the brewer had been induced to start in order to further his ambition for a seat in Parliament.

Grundy had put some of his best work into what was intended to be a scathing satire on Society journalism, which was not then in very good odour.

Grundy was always a man with a grievance. One of his grievances was against the Licenser of Plays.

Grundy and Joseph Mackay had done an adaptation of *La Petite Marquise*, which they called *The Novel Reader*. For years the Licenser refused to permit its production, and Grundy writhed under the ban.

When he was writing *The Glass of Fashion* he had a grievance against certain Society papers.

We had mapped out the play, and its provisional title was *Beauty*.

Grundy used to come to Aldersgate Street to see me. Here is a letter from him :

" DEAR SIMS,—I will call at Aldersgate Street at 1.30 on Thursday, and shall rely upon getting Act I. Try and arrange to give me the *Sunday and Monday* nights following. I am determined *Beauty* shall be finished before the New Year.

" Yours sincerely,

" SYDNEY GRUNDY."

Long before we found a manager to accept *The Glass of Fashion* Edmund Yates had become my friend and my editor.

Just about the time that the *Glass* was produced Edmund Yates was having trouble with Lord Lonsdale over an article in the *World*, and a libel case was pending which eventually ended in Yates going to Holloway.

There were certain passages in the play which I knew Yates would take to himself and feel deeply.

Grundy refused to remove them, and I could not insist, and so by a friendly arrangement my name was removed from the programmes and I resigned all my rights.

But I kept the friendship of Edmund Yates and of Sydney Grundy to the end.

The *World* had its beginning at a dinner-party at the house of the Rev. J. M. Bellew. Yates was a guest, and there he met Grenville Murray, of whom he had heard a good deal from Dickens. Grenville Murray was in the Foreign Office, and had written some admirable articles under the title of " The Roving Englishman " for *Household Words*.

Murray was the editor of the *Queen's Messenger*, a bitterly satirical journal. In June 1869 there appeared in the *Queen's Messenger* an article entitled " Bob Coachington Lord Jarvey," which was considered by Lord Carrington to refer to his late father.

Lord Carrington waited outside the Conservative Club, of which Murray was a member, and assaulted him as he came out. After the assault case had been disposed of, Lord Carrington brought a charge of perjury against Murray, and Murray left England and never returned.

But before this Murray and Yates had agreed to start a new weekly paper, "*The 'World,' a Journal for Men and Women.*" Yates went over to Paris, saw Murray, and they put up a capital of two hundred and fifty pounds each.

The first number of the *World* was published on July 8, 1874.

Among early contributors were Mr. Henry Labouchere, who wrote the City articles; the Earl of Winchilsea, who did the racing; Mrs. Lynn Linton, who had made a sensation with her "Girl of the Period"; Archibald Forbes; Comyns Carr; Herman Merivale; Mortimer Collins; T. H. S. Escott; and Henry W. Lucy, until recently the veteran "Toby"; and Dutton Cook.

Edmund Yates once told me that the whole sum he had spent in advertising the *World* from the start till that day did not exceed seventy pounds.

On the morning the first number of *Tit-Bits* appeared on the bookstalls I met Yates on the platform at King's Cross, and he was in rather an excited state. The appearance of *Tit-Bits* had upset him. He was under the impression that it was going to live principally upon tit bits lifted from the *World*.

"They're going to take my best paragraphs and yours, the brigands!" he said to me. But of course he was mistaken.

Grundy's motto was *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum*, which has been humorously translated as "Let justice be done though the ceiling fall." He was always bringing down bits of ceiling, and sometimes rather large pieces of it fell on his own head.

Yates was a fine fighter, and so was Sydney Grundy. He was fighting for his ideals to the day of his death.

CHAPTER XX

WHEN James Corbet—"Gentleman Jim"—came to London he called to see me one day. He wanted a play written round himself, and the principal scene was to be a glove-fight in which he was to give the theatre public a specimen of his prowess in the ring.

I did not fancy that a glove-fight would be a popular feature with a West End audience, and I gently declined the amiable offer.

I was mistaken. A glove-fight as a feature in a drama of human interest has proved a strong attraction in more than one stage production.

I was very much mistaken with regard to another matter which arose out of a business offer in connexion with a play.

When Mr. Cody, who afterwards became Colonel Cody, the well-known aviator, came to this country, he brought a play with him. It was called *The Great Klondyke*. Cody wanted me to rewrite *The Great Klondyke* for the English market and take charge of its business interests, as he intended to devote himself to preparing a flying machine.

I did not want to rewrite an American play, and I brought a pleasant interview to a close by telling Cody that I thought he had much better stick to the stage and leave the air alone, and I said that with *The Great Klondyke* he could always give a flying matinée.

At that time, if I remember rightly, Cody was only experimenting with a kite for military purposes. But the interview I had with him left no doubt in my mind that he seriously contemplated devoting himself to the invention of a machine which would be capable of flying through the air in any direction its pilot desired.

When Cody left me I looked upon him as a dreamer of dreams that could never possibly come true. How utterly

mistaken I was Colonel Cody proved by his splendid services to the art of aviation ; though, alas, he paid the penalty of his devotion and daring just at the moment when his splendid dream had been triumphantly realized.

James Corbet came to me, he told me, for two reasons. The first was that he understood that I had a habit of striking lucky with my plays, and the second reason was that he knew I was conversant with the business of the ring and "knew the ropes," at any rate from the safe side of them.

My memories of the ring go back to the great day when Sayers fought Heenan, and the man who beat the Benicia Boy was the idol of England.

I was a small boy at the Preparatory School for Young Gentlemen at Eastbourne at the time, but another boy—a good little boy—told me all about it.

He had asked permission to go upstairs to his bedroom half an hour earlier than usual in order that he might devote himself to pious meditation.

That night, as we lay in our little beds in the dormitory, the good little boy told me all about the great fight. He had in some way got hold of a copy of *Bell's Life* with a full report in it, and it was in order to read *Bell's Life* in the privacy of the unoccupied dormitory that he had sought the opportunity of an extra half-hour for pious meditation.

As a lad I saw a great deal of Tom Sayers. He lived somewhere off the Camden Road and had a great friend in Camden Town whom he used constantly to visit. This friend was the proprietor of a boot and shoe shop.

I have waited outside that boot shop in Camden Town many a time in order to see the champion come out and have a straight stare at him.

I knew Jem Mace in his prime and had many a pleasant chat with him over the old days of the ring when its glory and his had both departed.

I saw a good deal of Tom King after he had beaten Heenan and had been affectionately kissed in his corner by Jem Mace. It is odd that the Continental kissing custom should be quite common among boxers in their business hours, seeing that the pugilist is, or was for many years, an eminently British production.

Among other things Tom King took up when he left the ring was the growing of roses, and I thought that such a splendid idea that one day I asked the blooming bruiser—by which I mean the bruiser who had gone in for blooms—if he had ever read “The Rose and the Ring.” If I remember rightly the answer was in the negative.

Owen Swift, Nat Langham, Alec Keene, and Mike Madden—I worshipped them all in turn, sometimes in the flesh and sometimes in the spirit.

It was more in the spirit as regards Nat Langham and Alec Keene, both of whom kept sporting public-houses. When Nat Langham came to London he called his house the Cambrian, and it was stated that he had done so in order to let people know that he came from Cambridge.

Those were the days when an ex-champion of the prize-ring could tour with a circus show as a star turn, exhibit his belt, and give a sparring exhibition with a partner specially engaged for the business.

After the decline and fall of the prize-ring and the disappearance of the “merry mill” of which in the good old days Lord Palmerston would be an interested spectator—the prize-ring that was so enthralling that Thurtell, who murdered William Weare, asked when the rope was round his neck if the sheriff would be so good as to tell him the winner of the big fight that had been brought off the previous day—the champions found it profitable to book a tour and star round the provinces, taking various halls by the way, in which with a sparring partner they would give an evening’s entertainment.

The largest crowd I ever remember seeing outside a railway station I saw waiting at Leeds when J. L. Sullivan arrived to give a sparring exhibition with Jack Ashton.

That was before the great glove-fight between Sullivan and Charley Mitchell had been brought off “somewhere in France” in March 1888.

It was while returning from the fight that took place “somewhere in France,” in December 1887, between Jake Kilrain and Jim Smith, that Mr. Archie MacNeill, of the *Sportsman*, met his death in Boulogne in circumstances which pointed unmistakably to murder, and the mystery of

poor Archie MacNeill's death has never been satisfactorily solved.

It was after I had seen Sullivan stripped that I realized to the full the meaning of the phrase, "the pink of perfection."

Henry Sampson, my first editor, was an authority on the noble art. He wrote an excellent book on "Modern Boxing," and was frequently, before his editorial position interfered, asked to referee a glove-fight.

He had seen plenty of mills with what were poetically known as the "raw 'uns," and he had taken up boxing not only with enthusiasm but with expert knowledge.

The Amateur Boxing Association was formed at his instigation, and the founders of the A.B.A. met on January 21, 1880, in the *Referee* office, and it was in the *Referee* office that the preliminary rules were drawn up.

There were present on this occasion Henry Sampson, J. H. Douglas, L.A.C.; T. Anderson, West London B.C.; R. Wakefield, Highbury B.C.; G. J. Garland, St. James's A.C.; B. J. Angle, Thames R.C.; R. Frost-Smith, Clapton B.C.; J. G. Chambers, Amateur Athletic Club; E. T. Campbell, Clapton B.C.; and Richard Butler, the present editor of the *Referee*, as honorary secretary.

I saw most of the big glove-fights that were brought off in the home district, and most of the good-class competitions too.

At Sadler's Wells on October 26, 1877, when Jim Goode fought round after round with a broken arm with Micky Rees, I suddenly turned my head and found that we were surrounded by a large body of police.

The principals and the seconds were later on charged at the police court. A considerable number of the company on the stage, as soon as the presence of the police was discovered, made hurried exits in wrong directions. I was more fortunate, knowing the ropes. I dropped gently over into the orchestra and went the way of the band.

I remember a competition at a well-known sporting house in the Old Nichol, the Five Ink Horns, kept by Ted Napper, in which one of the competitors was killed in the ring. He was laid out on the bagatelle board with the gloves left on—it was Saturday night—to await the inquest on Monday.

I saw the memorable fight between the two bantams, Punch Dowsett and Tommy Hawkins, at the Cambridge Heath Skating Rink on December 11, 1877, and I remember the joy with which every time the latter got a blow in the crowd yelled, "Go it, Mr. Justice Hawkins!"

Some months later, in August '78, Hawkins fought Joe Fowler, this time for the featherweight championship. The fight was begun at St. Helena Gardens, Rotherhithe.

The men fought on a wooden stage, probably the old bandstand converted. There were several private fights in the crowd. An old scrapper who was drunk climbed up on to the ring. Ted Napper, one of the seconds, took hold of him, turned him upside down, and dropped him on to his head on the muddy ground below.

After fighting two hours darkness came on, and the affair was adjourned.

Mr. E. J. Francis, our publisher, who, after his *Athenæum* experiences, doubtless found the *Referee* entertainments an exciting change, during the proceedings lost his gold watch and chain, or, as the gentleman who took it would probably say, his "red super and slang."

On the following Monday there was a meeting at the Five Ink Horns to make further arrangements. Two *Referee* men were there, our present editor and the late Mr. Joe Jenn, who was on the staff.

Mr. Jenn had been a pedestrian by profession and a piano-forte tuner by trade. His real business—and pleasure—was pugilism: and it was the glory of his life that he had some share in training Tom Sayers.

A place in which the mill could be finished was eventually found. And what a place it was! It was the top floor of an empty warehouse in Stepney. A ring of about fourteen feet square had been pitched, and around it straw was littered. The price of admission, which had been comparatively high at the beginning, was gradually lowered, and eventually because they were making such a noise outside and attracting the attention of the police, some of the "mob" were admitted for nothing.

Let me tell you the story of that fight as an illustration of what we had to endure in the old days before glove-fighting

was recognized as a manly British sport, and when the rough element was "the predominant partner," or soon became so during the progress of the programme.

The Fowler-Hawkins fight was brought off on a blazing August afternoon. The heat was terrible, and the proverbial herrings in a barrel had by comparison comfortable accommodation.

Every time the heaving mass rolled and surged around the ring there was an ominous swaying of the floor.

Some of the local sporting gentry, unable to obtain admission in the legitimate way, climbed on to the roof and began to remove the tiles in order to get a peep at the proceedings.

They did not remove sufficient of the roof to give us any air, but we got a liberal shower of dirt and lime, which added considerably to the thirst the heat had already engendered.

The remembrance of that afternoon will linger with me while memory lasts. I had what was supposed to be a good seat on the floor near the ropes, but as I had to support the weight of about twenty other sportsmen on my back there were times when I could have done with a less uninterrupted view of the proceedings.

That fight took place on a hot August afternoon in 1878. That I am alive to write about it on a snowy March morning in 1916 I am thankful.

I remember a glove-fight that took place in a certain chapel in Bloomsbury, and the referee officiated in the pulpit.

Bill Richardson's was a great sporting house in the East End. This house, "The Blue Anchor," was not only an East End, but a West End resort. It was not a Corinthian house of call, but the Corinthians were generally called to it. When any big sporting events were to be brought off the East End generally gave the West the "office."

It was at Sadler's Wells where Charles Franks frequently provided excellent competitions, that Knifton, the Woolwich Infant, or the Eighty-one Ton Gun, as he was variously called, made his debut, and many a good man fought in the ring fitted on the stage in the sporting days of sunny old Sads.

Charley Mitchell and Chesterfield Goode were the pets of swelldom. Ned Donelly was the aristocratic instructor who had succeeded the Game Chicken of the Dickens days, and

Ned was generally to be seen somewhere near the old Criterion bar at the noonday hour.

I saw the fight between Tom Allen and Charley Davis, and the fight at Sadler's Wells on October 29, 1877, between Tom Allen and Gilbert Tomkin, when some blood of Tomkin's on Tom Allen's gloves caused one of the young lions of the *Daily Telegraph* to roar fiercely about the brutality of the noble art.

And now there is hardly a daily newspaper in London that does not give a full and often enthusiastic report of encounters in which the tapping of the claret is on quite a generous scale.

That the old-fashioned English sport had at one time become debased there is no doubt, but it was because there was no proper home for it, and it had to be brought off amid more or less ruffianly surroundings, and was often conducted on the "win, tie, or wrangle" principle.

But the sport never really declined or showed the white feather, and eventually it triumphed by showing the white shirt.

The Pelican Club, under the admirable management of Mr. Ernest Wells, saved the situation, and at the Pelican upper Bohemia sat side by side with sporting Belgravia in immaculate evening dress on Sunday nights—or rather Monday mornings, for the fights began after midnight—to see the champions contend for sums that the old knuckle fighters would never in their wildest dreams have imagined could be earned at the game.

Then came the National Sporting Club, where Evans and supper were once synonymous, and boxing had come to its own again.

Until a year or two ago I used to attend these fistic *causeries de lundi* regularly and in excellent company. My friend of many long years, Sir Melville Macnaghten, late Chief of the C.I.D. at Scotland Yard, had the charming idea of giving little Corinthian dinners on Monday nights at his house, 32 Warwick Square.

The little party generally consisted of Sir Melville, Colonel Vivian Majendie, Mr. B. J. Angle, Mr. Tom Anderson, Mr. Charles Moore, an old Indian friend of Sir Melville, and myself.

After dinner we drove to the National Sporting, and many a fine contest was a fitting finish to the Corinthian night's entertainment.

That pleasant little party of sportsmen meets on Monday nights, alas, no more. *Eheu! fugaces . . .*

Apropos of Majendie, my friend Captain Leonard Bell, late of the Royal Artillery, recently called to my mind that in 1896 Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Henry Smith, K.C.B., formerly Chief Commissioner of the City of London Police, wrote an article on "The Streets of London" in *Blackwood's Magazine*. In a portion dealing with the dynamite outrages he mentioned the bravery of a "young Artillery officer" who would be telephoned for and would drive straight where he was wanted, and smilingly remove the clockwork from an infernal machine.

Vivian Majendie died without the Victoria Cross, but many a time and oft he performed deeds in his official capacity as Inspector of Explosives to the Home Office that if performed upon the battlefield could not have failed to have won him the proud distinction.

The mention of the Heenan and Sayers fight revives my memories of Adah Isaacs Menken, for Heenan was one of her many husbands.

It was in 1864 that I saw her at Astley's Theatre, where she was playing Mazeppa, bound to the fiery untamed steed.

But I had previously formed one of the little crowd that used to wait on Menken nights to see the "famous and fearless" American actress drive by in her rather showy brougham. You could always tell when she was coming by the jingle of the bells which adorned the horses.

Adah Isaacs Menken was not of Jewish descent. She was christened Adelaide, and her father's name was McCord. He was a merchant in good circumstances in New Orleans. But he came to grief, and when he died he left a widow, a daughter, Adelaide, aged eight, and two little girls still younger, and nothing else.

The two little girls could dance—their father, who was passionately fond of dancing, had had them taught by a French professor of the art—and they got engagements in the ballet at the New Orleans Opera House. Adelaide McCord became a leading danseuse at the Tacon Theatre, Havana.

After a time she returned to New Orleans and taught French and Latin in a girls' school, and it was about this time that she published her first book of poems. In Texas she started a paper, and she was also carried off by Indians.

In 1856, at Galveston, Texas, she married her first husband, a young musician, Alexander Isaac Menken, whose name she ever afterwards used.

At Cincinnati, where she acted with Edwin Booth, she began to contribute articles and poems to the newspapers.

An article she wrote in the *Israelite*—she had adopted her husband's faith and changed her name from Adelaide to Adah to please him—was copied into the English newspapers, and Baron Rothschild sent the young authoress his personal congratulations.

What happened to Menken, the musician, I do not know, but in 1859 Adah became Mrs. J. C. Heenan.

It was in '61 that she made her first appearance in America as Mazeppa, and it was at the Green Street Theatre, Albany.

Then she married "Orpheus C. Kerr" without waiting to divorce the famous prize-fighter. But she got rid of Heenan legally a year later.

It was in 1864 that she came to England, and was quickly snapped up for Astley's.

This is how Mazeppa was described on the playbill at Astley's, under a block which represented a lady in fleshings bound to a fiery, untamed steed :

Miss Adah Isaacs Menken, who has earned well-deserved laurels in California, the Colonies, and the United States. Great curiosity is at its height respecting the part being performed by a Lady; but the English Public will judge and appreciate the character in this Classic Drama represented by a Heroine (in a Classic Dress) who has performed it hundreds of nights.

Menken had played Mazeppa hundreds of nights in America. She came to grief at first. She was strapped to a horse which started from the footlights up an eighteen-inch run into a painted mountain.

The fiery, untamed steed, unused to its rider, plunged off

the platform on to the stage, and Menken was picked up with blood streaming from a wound in her shoulder. But she insisted upon being bound to the horse again, and this time the feat was safely accomplished.

Menken played Mazeppa in London for a long time, and also appeared at Astley's in a drama, *The Child of the Sun*, written for her by John Brougham.

She went to Paris and became the friend of Alexandre Dumas. I have a photograph of the two taken together in quite a friendly and familiar attitude. In London Charles Dickens and Algernon Swinburne were her devoted literary admirers.

She dedicated her first book of poems, "Infelicia," to Charles Dickens, and he accepted the dedication and sent her a kindly little letter :

"Gad's Hill Place,

"Higham, by Rochester, Kent.

"Monday, 21st October, 1867.

"DEAR MISS MENKEN,—I shall have great pleasure in accepting your dedication, and I thank you for your portrait as a highly remarkable specimen of photography.

"I also thank you for the verses enclosed in your note. Many such enclosures come to me, but few so pathetically written, and fewer still so modestly sent.

"Faithfully yours,

"CHARLES DICKENS."

The poems of Adah Isaacs Menken have again and again been attributed—at least some of them—to Swinburne. This is how the mistake arose.

My journalistic godfather, John Thomson, was Swinburne's secretary. John Thomson was in love with Menken—madly in love with her.

Menken one day, just as Ambrose Bierce had done, showed Thomson a book in which she had pasted the poems she had written in various American newspapers, and one or two poems still in manuscript.

"Why don't you make a book of them?" said Thomson. "I'll get it published. John Camden Hotten will jump at them."



ALEXANDRE DUMAS
AND ADAH ISAACS MENKEN



Hotten took the poems, and John Thomson went over the proofs—and every line of “Infelicia” is the work of Adah Menken herself.

My friend Andrew Chatto was Hotten’s right hand at the time. It was he who received the copy from Menken at Hotten’s place in Piccadilly.

Years afterwards Chatto gave me the whole of the cuttings and the whole of the manuscript in Menken’s handwriting from which the book was set up. And I have them still.

Here are two verses from one of her poems :

*I can but own my life is vain,
A desert void of peace.
I missed the goal I sought to gain,
I missed the measure of the strain
That lulls Fame’s fever in the brain,
And bids Earth’s tumult cease.*

*Myself! Alas for theme so poor,
A theme but rich in Fear;
I stand a wreck on Error’s shore,
A spectre not within the door,
A houseless shadow evermore,
An exile lingering here.*

In 1866 Menken went back to America, divorced Mr. Newell —“Orpheus C. Kerr”—and married Mr. James Barclay.

In ’68 she went to Paris to rehearse *The Pirates of the Savannah*, was taken ill and died, and she was buried in Père Lachaise. On her tombstone are the words: “Thou knowest.” She was born a Christian and died a Jewess, and her body, after lying in Père Lachaise for some years, was removed to the Jewish portion of the cemetery in Montparnasse.

Among the archives of the firm of Chatto and Windus is a letter—a pathetic little letter—that John Thomson left for Adah Menken at Hotten’s place in Piccadilly.

She had promised to meet Thomson there, but she never came. She had gone to Paris to die.

This is the true story of Adelaide McCord, who died aged thirty-three, and who in her brief span of life had been actress,

equestrienne, poetess, journalist, and sculptor, the friend of Théophile Gautier and Alexandre Dumas, Charles Reade, Dickens, and Swinburne, the wife of Menken the musician, Heenan the prize-fighter, Orpheus C. Kerr the humorist, and Mr. James Barclay, whose profession I do not know.

And perhaps the only man who broke his heart at losing her was John Thomson, secretary to Algernon Charles Swinburne, sometime dramatic critic of the *Weekly Dispatch*, and the first man who gave me a chance in Fleet Street.

That he loved her, he told *her*; that her death broke his heart, he told *me*.

CHAPTER XXI

THE "Dagonet Ballads" have at various times brought me into the limelight, and occasionally made me feel somewhat uncomfortable in its glare.

"Christmas Day in the Workhouse" was for a time vigorously denounced as a mischievous attempt to set the paupers against their betters, but when a well-known social reformer died recently I read in several daily papers that he always declared that it was reading "Christmas Day in the Workhouse" which started him on his ceaseless campaign for old age pensions, a campaign which he lived to see crowned with victory.

I have a bill in which "George R. Sims, the Author of 'Billy's Rose,'" is announced to appear "positively" in support of Mrs. Georgina Weldon in her great battle for justice.

I knew Mrs. Georgina Weldon after the days of the Gounod trouble, when she had become a familiar figure in the Law Courts, and I have frequently seen her rise at inconvenient moments to address the learned judge.

But I never espoused the litigious lady's cause, and when I saw myself announced on staring wall-posters I at once sent a message to the manager of the hall requesting that the posters should be withdrawn. They were not withdrawn, but another notice was posted over them, and it was to this effect: "Mr. George R. Sims, the Author of 'Billy's Rose,' will positively not appear with Mrs. Georgina Weldon to-night."

It was through the "Dagonet Ballads" that I first came in touch with Robert Buchanan, the poet, who in later years was my companion and friend and my collaborator in four or five Adelphi dramas.

In the *Contemporary Review* he reviewed a number of volumes which had recently been published, and he made a

very charming reference to my modest effort, for which I was very grateful.

In some of his earlier reviews Buchanan had not pleased the poets upon whom he sat in judgment.

I have somewhere safely put away—so safely that I cannot find it—"The Fleshly School of Poetry," by Thomas Maitland. "Thomas Maitland" was Robert Buchanan, and Robert Buchanan afterwards expressed his deep regret for the pain which his criticism had caused Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

I have also somewhere safely concealed Swinburne's reply to "Thomas Maitland." It was entitled "Under the Microscope" and was a savage denunciation of "Thomas Maitland," upon whose head torrents of invective were poured forth by the mighty master of words. This titanic battle of the bards took place in 1870.

When Buchanan reviewed my modest ballads they had been published in book form.

The "Dagonet Ballads" have had, during their forty years' run, three publishers, and in two instances the whole stock was burnt out. But I am glad to say that they have been published for many years by Messrs. Routledge, of Broadway, Ludgate Hill, without misadventure.

The "Dagonet Ballads" were printed from time to time in the *Referee*. They were never put forward by me as poetry, but were intended for reciters who wanted something dramatic.

I generally wrote them on the Friday night, posted them about 3 A.M., and went to the office on Saturday afternoon to correct the proof.

One of the best known, "Billy's Rose," was written after returning from a glove-fight brought off in a shed in the East End, and "Billy's Rose" appeared in the same number of the *Referee* that contained a wonderful word-picture of the fearful fight by the editor.

"Billy's Rose" was always cropping up in the most unexpected places.

Just before the Derby of 1890 I went down with Mr. Sidney Jousiffe to stay with his brother, Mr. Charles Jousiffe, at Seven Barrows.

Charles Jousiffe, the famous trainer of Bendigo, had invited me to see the Derby trial of Surefoot, who was then first

favourite for the event. The trial took place between six and seven in the morning, and so far as I can remember the only persons present were myself, the trainer, Sidney Jousiffe, and the Rev. C. R. Light, who was then vicar of Lambourne. The vicar, who was a fine sportsman, was very much interested in the stable-lads, among whom he was doing excellent work.

After the trial of Surefoot—who, it will be remembered, started at 95 to 40 on, and was beaten by Sainfoin—we went back to Seven Barrows to breakfast, and Charley Jousiffe asked Mr. Light and myself if we would like to spend half an hour in the evening among the lads.

I went, and it was with mixed feelings that I heard the vicar say, "That lad is a fine reciter. You ought to hear him do your 'Billy's Rose.'"

The stable lad, a smart young fellow, took the hint, stepped forward, and gave vent to the whole of the poem for my special benefit.

Of course I shook him warmly by the hand and congratulated him, and I was right in doing so, for I observed as I turned away that he had brought tears to the eyes of several of the lads.

Alas, the defeat of Surefoot brought tears to the eyes of many of us who had long since passed our boyhood!

The "Dagonet Ballads" were recited at matinées, and one or two of them were particularly popular at the professional benefits which were common in those days but have now practically disappeared.

The benefit was sometimes part of the contract, so much a week and a benefit. The benefit was not always so profitable as the public imagined.

Wilson Barrett once showed me a telegram he had had from his brother George.

"DEAR WILL,"—Barrett's real name was William, not Wilson—"I have had a benefit. Please send me a fiver to get out of the town."

George Barrett was a fine low comedian, with a happy combination of pathos and humour and natural characterization. His Jarvis, the showman in *The Lights o' London*, and his Jaikes in *The Silver King* are among the happiest memories of old playgoers.

But he found himself very much out of his element when his brother deserted the modern for the classical drama. Wilson Barrett, on the contrary, revelled in classic costume and poetic diction, but when he tried *Hamlet* he rather fell back into the old melodramatic style and failed to please the critics.

He used to come to my house a good deal at that time, and one day just before the production of *Hamlet* he asked my housekeeper, who was generally known as "Mrs. Bulleyboy," if she would like a seat for the first night, and the offer was gratefully accepted.

Shortly after the production of *Hamlet* Barrett called, and the door was opened by Mrs. Bulleyboy.

"Well," said the popular tragedian to her, "how did you like *Hamlet*?"

"Well, sir," was the frank reply, "I'm not much of a judge of that sort of thing. But you did your little bit all right."

But to return to the "Dagonet Ballads." In a Drury Lane drama by my friend and collaborator, Henry Pettitt, one of the characters was always endeavouring to recite "The Lifeboat," and being sternly suppressed by everybody within hearing distance.

"I will now recite 'The Lifeboat,'" was his gag wheeze, and the usual reply was, "Oh, 'The Lifeboat' be hanged!"

The gentleman who wished "The Lifeboat" that fate had his wish gratified. "The Lifeboat" *was* hanged, or, rather, hung. A well-known painter selected it as the subject of his Academy picture, and it was hung—on the line.

After several ballads had appeared in the *Referee*, Edmund Yates asked me if I would write some for the *World*. He suggested that they should not deal with low life, but with society or rather semi-society subjects.

For the first "Dagonet Ballads" in the *Referee* I received one guinea. For each of the "Ballads of Babylon"—that was the title I gave them in the *World*—I received five pounds. For the last "Dagonet Ballad" I ever wrote, and I wrote at the request of the editor of the *New York Spirit of the Times*, I received forty pounds.

But that was one of the pleasures of being a "poet." There were pains and penalties.

A "Dagonet Ballad" once caused considerable consternation in a fashionable assembly at Washington. It was one of the ballads I had written for Edmund Yates.

One February night in 1886 Mrs. Brown-Potter, an aristocratic amateur, who was just starting her career on the stage, gave a recitation of "Ostler Joe." But let me quote from the *New York Times*:

Mrs. James Brown-Potter and her play have been the great topics of the week, and Washington has not always endorsed the verdict of New York. This amateur has been the first real social sensation of the winter. Her proceedings at the amateur entertainment in Mrs. Whitney's house have been the nine days' wonder and gossip.

Her reading of Swinburne's "Hostler Joe" raised universal condemnation about the town and distressed and deeply embarrassed every man and woman in the chosen audience that had to listen to those indecent verses. As an attempted defence it is said that Mrs. Potter first read the poem to three prominent society men, and they thought it very "chic" and quite the thing. Again, it is claimed that only the title was named to the most prominent of the trio, and he, mistaking it for one of John Hay's dialect poems, thought that it would make a variety in the usual placid routine of amateur readings, and said, "Read it."

The embarrassed audience and the silence that reigned at the conclusion of the recitation were a sufficient intimation of the storm of censure that has since followed. As an instance of the depravity of the times it may be told that since that unfortunate night the libraries and book-stores have been besieged by people anxious to read the verses again, and the few known to own private copies of Swinburne's are overrun with borrowers.

This sensational incident gave great activity to the sales of the tickets for the matinée of *The Russian Honeymoon*, and the audience was a most remarkable one. The under-current of gossip between the acts was "Hostler Joe," and the insinuations of Metropolitan visitors that Washington was absurdly prudish as well as provincial to be shocked by that modern poem were vehemently repelled.

Swinburne had been accused of writing the poems of Adah Isaacs Menken, but I never imagined that any of my verses would be fathered upon the great poet.

Some of the other papers announced that it was not Swinburne but Simms, and then there was a rush for the poems of William Gilmore Simms.

But presently the *New York World* published the poem and informed its readers that it was by the author of *The Lights o' London*.

Several enterprising publishers issued "Ostler Joe," and some of them reprinted the whole of the "Dagonet Ballads" in book form, but omitted to send me a banker's draft.

Then the American Press thought it was about time to rehabilitate me, and the following statement was made in a New York journal:

"The poem, a sort of homely Will Carleton ballad, and about as harmless as 'Over the Hills to the Poor-House,' has been published and republished and read by perhaps four-fifths of the entire adult population of the United States."

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* said: "Mrs. James Brown-Potter has done a wonderful thing for Mr. George R. Sims. His poem, 'Ostler Joe'—and it is a pretty good poem—is being printed all over the country."

I don't know where the "wonderful thing" came in, for I have never to this day had a red cent out of the American book.

Mrs. Brown-Potter, who subsequently appeared in London and America at various dates, and as a rule with Kyrle Bellew as her leading man, is perhaps best remembered here by her *Charlotte Corday*, which was produced at the Adelphi in 1898.

But these things happened many years after "Ostler Joe" had been such a big *réclame* for her.

Kyrle Bellew was an enormous favourite in America, where his picturesque appearance and romantic manner won the hearts of playgoers, more especially of the fair sex, and he was familiarly known as "Curly Bellew," a name suggested by the artistic arrangement of his locks, one of which, hung delicately over his forehead, had a poetic touch of grey in it.

The *New York World*, when, as will be seen a little later on, I had undertaken to write a play for Mrs. Brown-Potter on

"Ostler Joe" lines, wondered where Kyrle Bellew would come in.

"Mrs. Potter will, of course, play the part of the misguided wife, a rôle which Mr. Sims may be relied upon to suit to her undoubted capabilities. It is difficult, however, to see where Kyrle Bellew will come in. Mrs. Potter will not act without him, and yet to expect him to act the part of the 'ostler, wearing tight leather breeches and close-cropped hair, would be simply preposterous."

"Curly" Bellew with close-cropped hair! A thrill of horror would have stirred the bosoms of thousands of fair playgoers on both sides of the Atlantic.

Cora Urquhart Potter was the daughter-in-law of a bishop, and a very popular bishop. He is said to be responsible for the definition of the different way in which an American and an Englishman would greet a dignitary of the Church.

"An Englishman with whom I had become well acquainted," he said, "would always address me deferentially. An American who had met me once would, meeting me for a second time, slap me on the back and say, 'Hallo, Bish!'"

Mr. Brown-Potter, the bishop's son, was never very much in evidence over here, and the marriage was dissolved in 1903.

One of the American papers published some statistics in connexion with the "Ostler Joe" boom which are interesting. According to the American authority there were 667 leading articles written on "Ostler Joe," 4320 paragraphs, and 1285 newspapers reprinted the piece in full.

It was recited in 290 theatres, and 82 clergymen referred to it in their sermons. Last, but not least, says the American journal, one publisher confesses to having netted 2000 dollars in a fortnight. And Dagonet netted nothing.

A New York playwright wrote a play on it. I had written a play on it, and I have waited years for it to be produced. It was cast and in rehearsal, and the scenery painted and everything ready for its production when the war broke out, and my play, which I called *Jenny o' Mine*, came back to me, and still lies snugly in its long resting-place. Mr. F. Belasco set "Ostler Joe" to music for Tony Hart. In one of the *Mikado* companies "Katisha" recited it in a Japanese setting.

At Koster and Bial's Mr. James Gough recited it as a star turn. Miss Lillian Lewis, a Chicago actress, billed herself as "America's own dramatic queen," and announced that Geo. R. Sims's poem, "Ostler Joe," was written expressly for her.

Another Chicago lady, Miss Anna Morgan, declared that she was the only real and original reader of the poem, and that all other ladies who had recited it, Mrs. Brown-Potter included, were base imitators.

The discussion became at last so acrimonious as to which was the original reciter that the *New York Dramatic Mirror* suggested that a matinée should be given, and that the only item should be the competitive reading of "Ostler Joe" by all the claimants.

Of course there was the inevitable parody, "Hustler Jim" (with apologies to G. R. Sims, Bret Harte and Co.). At Baltimore the announcement that Miss Blanche Chapman would recite "Ostler Joe" at Ford's Grand Opera House packed the theatre to overflowing.

Some of the American newspapers who did not know set about to find out who I was, and one special correspondent in London favoured them with the following complimentary description :

"I don't suppose Mr. George R. Sims will be particularly satisfied when he learns of the tempest in a teapot his verses have created. He is rather a disagreeable man personally with a wonderful opinion of himself and an abominable temper. He has been singularly successful during the past five or six years, and I presume he has put aside enough money to make him independent for life."

Why the ballad should have made such a sensation in Washington I could never understand. Here in London Mrs. Kendal had recited it at a fashionable charity matinée at a West End theatre, and in Washington, as a matter of fact, Mrs. Brown-Potter had read it to Secretary Endicott and Mrs. Endicott and Senator Whitney, and they had asked her to recite it.

In the meantime the "Ostler Joe" sensation had crossed the Atlantic, and the ballad had caught on with London audiences.

Lionel Brough was going to America. At a benefit given to him as a gracious send-off at Drury Lane a rhymed address was spoken by Mrs. Keeley, and Mrs. Kendal recited "Ostler Joe" at the National Theatre.

"Ostler Joe," thanks to Mrs. Kendal, also introduced his homely figure at the St. James's Hall. On July 5, 1886, Mr. Cusins gave a concert, and all the musical world still in town flocked to listen to the singing of Albani, Scalchi, Lloyd, and Santley, but, as was duly recorded in the notices of the concert, they also went to hear Mrs. Kendal recite "Ostler Joe," and on turning to the notice in the *Lady* I find that Mrs. Kendal's recitation of "Ostler Joe" was a marvellous performance, "at the conclusion of which there was not a dry eye in the room."

I never imagined that it would be my fate to make a St. James's Hall audience cry at an Albani, Scalchi, Lloyd, and Santley concert. I felt that I ought to apologize. I didn't then, but I do so now.

Before the sensation in America had subsided, Mrs. Brown-Potter came to England. She had determined to be a real actress, and Kyrle Bellew was to be her leading man.

Kyrle Bellew was an old acquaintance of mine when his father, the Rev. J. M. Bellew, was the vicar of St. Mark's, Hamilton Terrace.

The Rev. J. M. Bellew, whose real name was Higgins, was a finished elocutionist and gave public readings. He was very much interested in the drama, and it was sometimes assumed that when the evening service at St. Mark's was sharp and short it was because our pastor was in a hurry to get to a rehearsal at the Lyceum.

Kyrle Bellew brought Mrs. Potter to see me. She thought that if I would write a play for her, and she could announce it as by the author of "Ostler Joe," it would be a pretty safe card in the States.

Mrs. Brown-Potter had her two golden-haired little girls with her here in England, and had also brought her father, Colonel Urquhart, with her. She gave me a contract and two hundred-pound notes on account of fees, and I set to work, and in due course handed my new manageress a four-act play, which I called *A Wife's Ordeal*. It was a free adaptation

of a French play, but more or less English in characterization and sentiment.

Mrs. Brown-Potter and Kyrle Bellew went back to America with the play, but before they produced it in New York they gave it a trial show at a one-night stand somewhere in the Wild West, and I presume that the Wild West did not care about it.

At any rate, it never came to New York, and I put it away for some years, little dreaming that it would ever be the play that would help to bring about a real life tragedy.

It was taken out to Australia by Arthur Dacre and Amy Roselle, and when I received my fees from Arthur Dacre he had murdered his wife and committed suicide.

The Wife's Ordeal was the title of the stage play. It was the title of the tragedy of Amy Roselle's life.

She was a charming actress, and came of a theatrical family. Her brother, Percy Roselle, was a dwarf, and played children's parts in the Drury Lane pantomimes as "Master Percy Roselle" after he had come to man's estate.

Arthur Dacre—his real name was Arthur James—was a doctor. He took to the stage and became a fair actor. He had a wife, from whom he was separated. He fell in love with Amy Roselle and she fell in love with him.

And the wife waited for them sometimes at the stage door and made scenes.

But eventually Arthur Dacre married Amy Roselle, and for a time there was sunshine.

But presently came the trouble of the joint engagement. The Dacres were a devoted couple, and the idea of separation by professional engagements was abhorrent to them.

Managers wanted Amy Roselle, but they didn't want Arthur Dacre.

But the Dacres stood out for "a joint engagement," especially when the offer to the wife came from a touring manager.

Their obstinacy in the matter brought about a disastrous state of affairs. They both remained out of an engagement so long that the wolf was at the door.

Mr. E. W. Royce went to Australia with, I think, one of the Gaiety companies. He knew the Dacres, sympathized

with them, and promised to see if he could get them an Australian engagement.

The Dacres waited patiently and bravely for the cable that was to bring them the good news.

Dacre and Amy Roselle had read *The Wife's Ordeal*, and they fancied the parts would suit them. Might they have it for their repertoire in Australia?

I told Dacre that it had not succeeded with Mrs. Brown-Potter and Kyrle Bellew, but he said that he was sure it had never had a fair chance.

One day Dacre came to me radiant. The cable had come. Their fares had been sent. They would produce *The Wife's Ordeal* at the Bijou Theatre, Melbourne.

The next news of *The Wife's Ordeal* I had received from Dacre in a letter dated "Bijou Theatre, Melbourne, July 10th, 1895."

"MY DEAR SIMS,—We produced *The Wife's Ordeal* on Saturday night with every possible sign of success, though if ever two poor devils had everything against them we had. The weather was hotter than anything I have ever known, and it continued so for eight days and nights without a break.

"As if the sun was not fierce enough, there were miles of bush on fire, and you could smell the burning and feel the wind as hot as if you were standing in front of a furnace.

"But we had an undoubted success. Everybody likes us, and everybody assures us that, taking the weather into consideration, we have done wonderfully well."

Then came another letter dated "Melbourne, 5th March."

"MY DEAR SIMS,—I wish I could send you a better account of the receipts. I send you the notices, as I know you would like to see them. What the heaven-born geniuses could see in common between the *Doll's House* and your play Heaven only knows.

"Whatever the fate of the play, I shall always be grateful to you and *The Wife's Ordeal* for one thing, and that is that it has served to obtain for Mrs. Dacre an excellent introduction

here. But the work is terrible for her. It is as much as she can do to get her dinner and lie down for an hour before the rehearsal and night performance. I took her for a few hours' sail on Sunday, and that is literally the first bit of relaxation we have had since we have been here.

"I enclose official statement of nightly receipts and a draft for your fees.

"Always yours,

"ARTHUR DACRE."

The Dacres, after playing for some time in Melbourne, visited Adelaide, and in the autumn they were in Sydney, and Dacre sent me a banker's draft for further performances of *The Wife's Ordeal* and told me he was entering into a contract with Mr. George Leech to play in *The Land of the Moa*.

When I opened Dacre's last letter the good fellow who sent it had murdered his wife and put an end to his own existence.

The Land of the Moa was taken off and *The Silence of Dean Maitland* was put into rehearsal for immediate production. The part of Dean Maitland was allotted to Dacre. It was the longest he had ever studied, and he appeared to think that it had been given him with the object of harassing him.

He told friends who spoke with him and tried to soothe him that Melbourne had crushed his spirits. He was in a state of high nervous tension, and he and his wife were seen later on weeping together. This was on Saturday afternoon.

On the Sunday, worn out with trouble and despairing of the future—they had met with reverses everywhere in Australia, and had made nothing to clear off the liabilities they had left behind them in England—they brought their life's tragedy to a close.

Arthur Dacre, there is every reason to believe at her own request, shot his loyal and devoted wife, and then shot himself.

I heard afterwards that the stress of the situation was increased by the knowledge that Amy Roselle would shortly have to undergo a serious surgical operation.

In the room occupied by the Dacres was found a small casket containing some English soil and moss. It had been taken from the grave of the infant child they had left behind them in the old country. Amy Roselle had taken that

casket across the seas with her, and she expressed a wish to a friend that should she die in Australia the casket with its contents should be buried with her.

The last act of *The Wife's Ordeal* had been played. Amy Roselle was at rest.

CHAPTER XXII

WHETHER George Edwardes came to me or I went to him I cannot say with certainty, but we met in the middle 'eighties.

I had had for some time at the back of my head an idea of doing a more or less operatic burlesque of *Faust*.

I had talked it over with Pettitt, and one evening George Edwardes, who had then blossomed into management—I think he was running *Little Jack Sheppard* at the time—told me that he thought that the days of the old-fashioned burlesque with puns and parodies of popular songs were numbered, and he believed there was a great chance for something light and bright with original music and plenty of pretty girls who could sing and dance.

I saw an opening, and I sprang the idea of *Faust* upon him. A few days afterwards he commissioned Pettitt and myself to write the play, and it was agreed that Meyer Lutz, who at the time was the *chef d'orchestre* at the Gaiety, should compose the music.

John Hollingshead had entered into partnership with George Edwardes when *Little Jack Sheppard* was produced. Before the end of the run he had retired and left the young Irishman who was to become "the father of musical comedy" in sole possession.

The authors of *Little Jack Sheppard* were my kinsman William Yardley and H. Pottinger Stephens, who was familiarly known in Fleet Street as "Pot."

"Pot" did some excellent comic-opera work with Teddy Solomon as his composer. Teddy was a clever musician and a delightful little fellow, but very Bohemian in his financial arrangements.

He was a great favourite with all his brother composers, who thought highly of his music.

I remember that on one occasion, when he was busy upon

an opera, he was very much annoyed by certain creditors who persistently interfered with his moments of inspiration by serving him with writs.

Sir Arthur Sullivan, Frederic Clay, and one or two friends—I think I was one of them—clubbed together and gave him a couple of hundred pounds in order that he might get rid of the worriers. The money was handed over to Teddy in crisp bank-notes one Saturday morning.

On the Sunday evening Clay and Sullivan dined together at the Café Royal. Suddenly they heard a familiar laugh, looked across the room, and saw a young friend of theirs at an adjacent table. Teddy was giving a jolly little dinner-party to half a dozen of his friends, who were both of the brave and the fair sex. And the champagne corks were jumping merrily.

The operatic burlesque of *Faust*, which was produced at the Gaiety in October 1888, revived at the Globe in 1889, and again at the Gaiety in 1890, is remarkable at least for one fact. It brought the phrase “up-to-date” into general use wherever the English language is spoken.

So little was the phrase known at the time that Augustus Moore, passing the Gaiety when the bills had just been put out announcing the forthcoming production, and seeing me talking to George Edwardes in the entrance hall, came in to point out to me that the phrase must be wrong. “Surely,” he said, “if you mean anything at all you mean that *Faust* is brought down to date.”

But the phrase, unfamiliar as it was in theatrical, literary, and newspaper circles, was very well known in the commercial world. It was in the City that I first saw it used. “SIR,—I beg to enclose a copy of your account up to date.”

It was from the City that I got the idea of describing the Gaiety story of *Faust* as written “Up-to-date,” and the phrase caught on. But when it was first used at the Gaiety for the Sims-Pettitt-Lutz version of *Faust* it had never been used in any newspaper or book or public speech or private conversation.

Faust Up-to-date had a wonderful cast. Florence St. John was Marguerite; Violet Cameron was Faust; Lonnen, Mephistopheles; George Stone, Valentine; Maria Jones,

Martha ; and Fanny Robina was Siebel ; and the Vivandière was played by a very young actress named Mabel Love.

Bob Martin, as usual, supplied a couple of songs, but nearly the whole of the music was original and was by Meyer Lutz.

The *pas de quatre* which he wrote for *Faust* not only took the town but became world-famous. The original dancers of the *pas de quatre* were Florence Levy, Lillian Price, Eva Greville, and Maud Wilmot.

There had been some discussion with regard to a romantic incident in the life of a young lady who was appearing in *Faust*—she was supposed to have attempted to commit suicide—and this led to certain letters in the papers, one of them being written by Mrs. Millicent Garrett Fawcett.

Mrs. Fawcett was invited to come and see *Faust Up-to-date* herself.

She came, she saw, and she sent George Edwardes her report. Here are some passages from it :

“ July 26th. Last night I carried out my promise to Mr. G. Edwardes and went to the Gaiety Theatre to see *Faust Up-to-date*. It was a depressing performance with hardly any real fun or humour in it ; leaving an impression (as Mr. Ruskin said of the pantomime of *The Forty Thieves*) of ‘ an ugly and disturbing dream.’ ”

Here is Mrs. Fawcett’s description of the famous *pas de quatre* :

“ The dresses of the dancers were pretty, but the dances were quite the reverse. In one most ungraceful figure, the four dancing girls stand close together behind one another and then make what I can only attempt to describe as a sort of Catherine wheel of legs. It really was rather like fireworks without the fire, legs shooting out in every direction like the spokes of a wheel.”

It is a long report, and this is the gentle conclusion : “ With all my fondness for the theatre, I would never go near a theatre again if they all provided entertainments of the type of *Faust Up-to-date*.”

I met Meyer Lutz for the first time at Scarborough. It was his custom to leave the Gaiety at the end of the summer season in order to conduct the Scarborough Band which played on the front. The members of the band wore black

coats and black waistcoats, black ties and black top hats, and their "uniform" gave them the appearance of musical undertakers.

At the end of the season Meyer Lutz and the members of his mournfully garbed band put their black toppers in the lockers under the seats in the bandstand and left them there till they donned them again the following year, the black suits and the black hats being, I believe, the property of the town.

I cannot vouch for the truth of the story, but I was assured by a Scarborough Pressman that the hats of some of the black band were at least ten years old.

Dear old Meyer Lutz was a character and in many ways a remarkable man. He was a fine musician and during the whole time that he was the musical conductor at the Gaiety he was also organist and director of music at St. George's Cathedral, Southwark. In his very young days Meyer Lutz was an infant prodigy—a boy pianist.

Very few people who knew him well as the musical conductor of the Gaiety burlesques were aware of his very close connexion, or rather association, with the tragic end of the Mad King of Bavaria, who drowned himself and his attendant physician in the Starnberg Lake.

Ludwig of Bavaria built himself a palace that was a world wonder, dressed himself as Lohengrin and sailed about the lake at midnight on the back of a mechanical swan; Ludwig of Bavaria, who had Wagner's operas magnificently produced with himself as the sole spectator, after spending millions on his enchanted palace, wanted to spend more millions in order to "complete" it.

The Minister President of Bavaria at that time was Baron von Lutz. Baron von Lutz informed the King that his country was not in a condition to comply with the royal demand.

Thereupon the King wrote to Baron von Lutz and informed him that unless the money was forthcoming within seven days the head of Baron von Lutz would be summarily deprived of the body to which it belonged.

Baron von Lutz brought the letter before the Bavarian Cabinet, with the result that a commission was appointed and the King was declared to be insane and incapable of managing his own affairs.

The King was later on conveyed to a small castle on the lake, and Dr. Gudden was appointed to be his medical attendant.

The mad King only spent one night in his royal prison. On the evening of the second day, Whit Monday, 1886, he went for a walk with the doctor and several attendants.

The King talked so rationally that the doctor was put off his guard, and at his royal patient's request sent the attendants back to the castle.

The King and the doctor walked on. They walked until they reached the edge of the lake. No one knows what happened there, but some time afterwards when the non-return of the King and the doctor to the palace had caused alarm a search was made, and the bodies of both were found in the lake.

Some years ago I stood one autumn evening by the little lamp that throws a red glow over the spot at which the tragedy occurred. The red lamp was placed there as a memorial of the tragedy by the mad King's uncle, who was appointed regent.

My companion was a well-informed official who probably knew the circumstances as well as anybody, and he told me that the theory of the experts who had examined the bodies and examined the lake and the shore was that by the edge of the water the King had suddenly gripped the physician by the throat, intending to strangle him and throw his body into the lake, but the doctor fought for his life, and in the struggle the King, still gripping the doctor's throat—the marks of the fingers were still visible when the body was found—dragged him into the water, forced him under, held him there till he was drowned, and then walked on and on and on into the deep waters until they closed over his head, and the Mad King was at peace at last.

The Baron von Lutz, who by his refusal to advise the Government to grant the King the million he demanded, was the indirect cause of the tragedy of the Starnberg Lake, was the elder brother of Meyer Lutz, who for nearly a quarter of a century was the master of music at the Gaiety and the composer of *Faust Up-to-date*.

It was with *Faust Up-to-date*, followed by *Carmen*

Up-to-Data, that I was connected with the Gaiety as a playwright.

As a playgoer I have a hundred happy memories of the Temple of the Sacred Lamp. I saw the first performance that was ever given in the old Gaiety Theatre, and I was invited to appear on the stage in the last performance in the Temple that was then doomed to demolition.

This last performance took place on the night of July 4, 1903. The special feature was called *The Linkman, or Gaiety Memories*, and many of the old favourites appeared in characters from the old successes.

Gertie Millar was Morgiana in *The Forty Thieves*, Ethel Sydney was Marguerite in *Faust Up-to-date*, George Grossmith was Noirtier in *Monte Cristo, Junior*, and Don Cæsar de Bazan in *Ruy Blas*; Edmund Payne was Hassarac in *The Forty Thieves* and the Lieutenant in *Don Juan*, and Lionel Mackinder, who, though past the age, nobly gave his life for his country somewhere in France, was Ali Baba and Don Jose in *Carmen Up-to-Data*.

But between that memorable night in 1903 and the far-off opening night in '68 what visions of joy, what memories of domestic drama and radiant romance!

I remember that at the Gaiety John Hollingshead, in a spirit of mischievous humour, once gave us *The Castle Spectre*.

It was at the Gaiety that the company of the Comédie Française made its first appearance in England.

On Sarah Bernhardt nights the guinea stalls were often sold in the "open market" by subscribers for five guineas. That was in 1879.

In 1880 Sarah came again by herself at a salary of five hundred and sixty pounds a week.

Henry Irving was playing in *Formosa* at Drury Lane when he was released by Chatterton to play the part of Chevenix in *Uncle Dick's Darling*.

Adelaide Neilson was the heroine in this well-remembered Byron play, and there was a curious double contretemps. She was struck on the head by a piece of scenery, and could not appear on the following night.

That charming actress, Miss Marie Litton, was Miss Neilson's understudy. Hollingshead only heard at twelve o'clock in

the day that Miss Neilson would not be able to appear that evening.

He sent up at once to Miss Litton, who was Mrs. Wybrow Robertson, only to discover that she had that morning presented her husband with a small addition to the family.

So "Practical John" had to come forward and make an apology to the audience, and the part of Mary Belton was read by Miss Tremaine.

When Hollingshead got up a benefit at the Gaiety for John Parry, Charles Mathews, who was to have played, was taken suddenly unwell, and those two evergreen comedians, Mr. Alfred Bishop and Mr. Charles Collette, divided the characters between them with great satisfaction to the audience.

The sensation caused by the *Dancing Quakers*, Mr. Ryley and Miss Barnum, is probably forgotten, and so is the success made by Miss Rose Fox in the skipping-rope dance.

Hollingshead found Rose Fox at a penny gaff in the East End and brought her straight away to the Gaiety.

It was at the Gaiety that Ibsen was first played upon the English stage. The play was *Quicksands* and the adapter Mr. William Archer. And the next production was *The Forty Thieves*.

I have a lively remembrance of Arthur Cecil—he shared a flat near the Haymarket Theatre with Freddy Clay, and I used to go there for wonderful breakfasts in the Dublin prawn season—playing Tony Lumpkin at the Gaiety.

I had to see Billy Florence and Mrs. Florence more than once in *The Almighty Dollar* at the Gaiety, because I was writing a play for them to take back to America.

Billy Florence informed me that his greatest ambition was to settle in this country and get a consulship somewhere. Bret Harte was at that time a consul at Glasgow, and I think that put the idea into Florence's head.

It was Billy Florence who strolled round Covent Garden when peaches were not in season here, went in and bought and ate six. When he was told they were a guinea each it was too late for him to resist the temptation of the rare and refreshing fruit.

But the American invasion of the Gaiety that is, perhaps, best remembered to-day was that of Mr. Henry E. Dixey, an

American variety actor who brought an entirely American company with him to play in *Adonis*.

Dixey was the original Boss Knivett in America in my *Romany Rye* in 1882.

Another cherished Gaiety memory is that of the amateur pantomime played on the afternoon of February 13, 1875.

In the Harlequinade Mr. William Wye, otherwise William Yardley, was the Clown, Mr. T. Knox Holmes was the Pantaloon, W. S. Gilbert was Harlequin, and Mademoiselle Rosa was the Columbine.

Talking of Mademoiselle Rosa reminds me that she was one of the Alhambra company when they went for a merry sea trip. They chartered a steamer and the whole company left London for a Sunday trip to Boulogne, got caught in a terrible storm in "the middle of the ocean," and gave themselves up for lost.

M. Georges Jacobi, the musical director, was on board, and he gave me a vivid description of the scene.

Almost every member of the company was on board, including the ballet ladies. All had departed arrayed in their finest frippery for the fascinating of fair France, but when the great seas washed the decks and swamped the saloons the result was shocking.

The ship never got to Boulogne, but she managed to bring the Alhambra company back in safety to the shores of perfidious Albion, and they landed, as one of the company put it, looking like a wrung-out lot of drowned tramps.

But the trade-mark of the Gaiety, if one may use such a word in connexion with a Temple of Art, was in the old days burlesque, and our fairest memories are perhaps of Kate Vaughan and Connie Gilchrist—"The Golden Girl" of Whistlerian art—and Letty Lind and Sylvia Grey, Cissie Loftus, Topsy Sinden, and Phyllis Broughton.

Our joyous memories are of Nellie Farren and Marion Hood and Ada Blanche and Florence St. John, and there are happy memories of Emily Duncan and Hetty Hamer and Alma Stanley. Miss Gertie Millar has a Gaiety all by herself.

The Gaiety comedians began very early with Toole and dear old Lal Brough and finished with Teddy Payne and George Grossmith, jun., at the end of a list which included

Edward Terry and Fred Leslie and Seymour Hicks, Willie Edouin and E. W. Royce, J. J. Dallas, David James, Charles Danby, and—I wonder how many playgoers remember it?—Mr. Cyril Maude was once in Gaiety burlesque and played in *Frankenstein*.

And Mr. John D'Auban, whom I meet every Christmas at Drury Lane, lithe and lissom as ever, was one of the accomplished pair of dancers and pantomimists who scored an instantaneous success as D'Auban and Warde on the night that the lights of the Gaiety first beamed upon the Strand.

And that was in the 'sixties.

CHAPTER XXIII

I HAVE said that it was through the "Dagonet Ballads" that I first came in touch with Robert Buchanan, but our collaboration at the Adelphi commenced many years after.

Buchanan had made a big success with *A Man's Shadow*, a version of *Roger la Honte*, which he did for Beerbohm Tree at the Haymarket, and the Brothers Gatti suggested that he should be my next collaborator at the Adelphi.

Our first melodrama, *The English Rose*, was a great success, with Leonard Boyne, Evelyn Millard, Lionel Rignold, and Katey James in the cast, and J. D. Beveridge, whose delightful impersonation of the Knight of Ballyveen is a dear remembrance of old playgoers.

Leonard Boyne, always a splendid horseman on and off the stage, rode one of his many successful mounts to victory in the big scene.

Buchanan was not quite happy about himself as a melodramatist. I am not sure that it was not a remark of Robert Browning that first made him unhappy at the Adelphi.

At the Academy dinner Lecky, in responding to the toast of literature, made an enthusiastic reference to Buchanan's beautiful poem *The City of Dream*. Browning, when he heard Buchanan's name mentioned, turned to his neighbour and in an audible voice exclaimed, "Buchanan! Buchanan! Is he talking about the man who writes plays with Sims at the Adelphi?"

The usual d—d good-natured friends told Buchanan, and it was soon afterwards that he began to urge me to let him adopt a pseudonym in our collaboration. I did not like the idea, and I told him so. Soon after I received the following letter:

"DEAR SIMS,—Thanks for your letter. Now that you realize exactly what I mean, and feel that it implies no forget-

fulness of our friendship, I'm sure you'll help me. I should feel so *free* for stage purposes if I worked under a pseudonym, and it wouldn't matter at all whether or not the public *knew* it to be such (as they would)—it would keep the two kinds of work completely distinct. And after all it is *your* name, not mine, which attracts to the Adelphi, for you are a popular writer, and I a d—d unpopular one.

"I should work with ten times the heart if my dramatic work were kept altogether apart from my poetical, so far as my *name* is concerned. Unfortunately, I can't afford to be a poet only—I wish I could, for poetry alone gives me real happiness, not for any reward it yields in pence or praise, but solely because it was my first love and is my last.

"Nor have I any scorn for the stage. On the contrary, I honour and delight in it, and as for you, I've always held you to be one of the choicest spirits of the time, far higher in thought and power than many of us poets. Dramatic work falls justly and finely into your broad sympathy with life for life's sake. I, on the other hand, am a dreamer, a whiner after the Unknown and Unknowable. I was 'built that way.'

"You've given me many, many happy days. I love you personally, and would do anything in the world to bring you happiness and honour. So you mustn't, *mustn't misconceive me!* Set me down as a fool if you like, but never doubt the friendship which makes me subscribe myself, yours always,

"ROBERT BUCHANAN."

The letter shows plainly enough the condition of mind with which Buchanan approached Adelphi melodrama.

But he wanted money. He had been foolish enough to take the Lyric Theatre in order to run a poetic play, *The Bride of Love*, in which his charming and talented sister-in-law, Miss Harriett Jay, had scored a distinct success at a *matinée*.

The poet, who was never a very far-seeing man in business matters, thought that a *matinée* production was good enough for a regular run, which, of course, it was not, and his mistake saddled him with a heavy burden of debt.

Directly one of our Adelphi dramas had been produced, a first night success scored, and the box-office had begun to

talk promisingly, Buchanan was anxious to realize—in other words, to sell for cash.

I endeavoured to dissuade him, pointing out that a successful melodrama might be a property for twenty or thirty years, but he said he could not afford to wait for twenty or thirty years for his money, and if I could arrange to buy his share for two thousand five hundred down that sum would be most useful to him and relieve his mind of considerable anxiety.

I submitted the proposition to the Messrs. Gatti, and we bought the Bard out between us at his own earnest request.

The same thing happened with *The Trumpet Call*. The moment it had proved a success Buchanan wanted to sell. It would not have been wise for the Gattis or myself to allow a share of the property to pass into the hands of a stranger, so again we bought the poet's share for the ready money of which he seemed to be perpetually in desperate need.

We wrote together *The White Rose*, in which Mrs. Patrick Campbell made such an artistic success as Elizabeth Cromwell, one of the gentlest and sweetest performances she has ever given to the English stage.

This was followed by *The Lights of Home*, with Mrs. Campbell as the heroine and Kyrle Bellew as the hero, and then came *The Black Domino*.

While *The Black Domino* was running Arthur Pinero—he was not "Sir" then—came to the Adelphi and saw in Mrs. Patrick Campbell the ideal Paula for *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, a play that George Alexander was about to put in rehearsal at the St. James's.

The happenings which led up to the engagement of Mrs. Patrick Campbell for the part of Paula make quite a little romance of the stage. Here are the facts of the romance.

The story of the early adventures of Sir Arthur Pinero's world-famous play is interesting.

After he had written it he sent it to John Hare. What the eminent actor and manager said about it was not encouraging. It met with no more favourable reception when Beerbohm Tree read it. Then Pinero took it to George Alexander.

The illustrious three must forgive me the omission of the "Sir." It was an honour they all deserved, but had not then received.

Alexander was then playing R. C. Carton's *Liberty Hall* to splendid business, and he shook his head.

By this time Pinero was getting rather tired of taking the lady round the houses, so he said to George Alexander, "Put it up at a matinée and I won't ask for any fees. I want it done."

Alexander agreed, and little paragraphs began to appear in the Press about a new Pinero play which was to be put up at a matinée.

Mr. Carton very naturally objected that this was not fair to *Liberty Hall*. It gave the idea that the "Hall" would soon be "at liberty."

The manager of the St. James's saw the difficulty and had an idea. "Look here," he said to Pinero, "if you don't mind waiting till late in the season I'll put the play up for a run."

And that is how the wonderful play came to its own at last.

But before *Tanqueray* was produced there was considerable difficulty in "finding the lady."

The author's original idea was Miss Winifred Emery. Miss Emery was Mrs. Cyril Maude. When the time came to put the play in rehearsal Mrs. Maude was not well enough to appear.

Olga Nethersole was suggested, but she was playing, and her manager refused to release her. With Julia Neilson there was the same difficulty.

Then Pinero remembered having seen Mrs. Patrick Campbell in the provinces when she was acting with the Ben Greet Company, and he knew that she had made a success at the Adelphi, and was then playing there in *The Black Domino*, so the distinguished dramatist came to the Adelphi, saw the play, saw Mrs. Campbell, and asked the Gattis if they would release her, and the Gattis very politely but very firmly declined.

In the meantime Miss Elizabeth Robins had scored a great success in *Hedda Gabler*, and the part of Paula was soon afterwards offered to her and accepted by her.

But Mrs. Patrick Campbell was very anxious to go to the St. James's, a theatre she thought would suit her better than the Adelphi.

She came to me and asked me if I would use my influence with the Gattis and get them to alter their decision, and the Gattis, because we had been good friends privately and in business for so many years, said that if I personally wished it they could not refuse.

But Elizabeth Robins was already engaged, and was invited with the company to the St. James's on a certain afternoon to hear Pinero read his play.

About two hours before the play was to be read Miss Robins heard that her friend Stella Campbell was free to play the part, and then she did a very noble and a very generous thing. She voluntarily resigned the part in which she believed that she had one of the finest chances of her career, and she resigned it in order to give an opportunity to her friend.

* * * * *

Robert Buchanan, poet, man of letters and dramatist, was one of the most interesting personalities of his generation.

At one moment he would, in a fit of poetic exaltation, imagine himself conversing with the Almighty on Hampstead Heath, and the next moment he would be rushing to the telephone to ask if such and such a horse had won the big race.

I have listened spellbound in the afternoon to some beautiful poem he had just written, and have met him at midnight disguised as a monk at a Covent Garden ball.

He was a born gambler, and when he began to make money in the theatre he took to the Turf, but he always took to it most violently and most recklessly when he was in financial difficulties.

He had, with the insanity of genius, taken the Opera Comique in order to run a play written by himself and Henry Murray, *The Society Butterfly*, in which Mrs. Langtry was appearing.

When it became a question of closing down or getting the money to carry on, Buchanan, with his friend Henry Murray, went off to Lingfield races with a pocketful of bank-notes in order to back a certain horse which had been privately tipped to him as a good thing and certain to start at a long price. The name of the horse was Theseus.

Theseus ran in the fourth race. Some little time before

the start Buchanan gave Murray a hundred pounds in bank-notes. He was to go to the ring and back Theseus.

But they remained chatting for a time as they had not seen the horses go by for their preliminary canter. They did not know that instead of parading as usual before the stands and carriages the horses had passed through to the starting-post. Murray and Buchanan were still talking when they heard a roar of "They're off!"

Murray ran with all his speed towards the ring, hoping that he might be able to get the money on, but he had to fight his way through a crowd and through the police, and he just reached the ring with the notes grasped in his hand as the first horse dashed past the winning-post.

And the first horse was Theseus. It had started at 20 to 1.

When Murray went back to Buchanan with the uninvested bank-notes still crumpled in his hand, the Bard received the news with a smile, and said, "Better luck next time. You look bowled over, old man. You'll find some whisky in the hamper."

And the money that Theseus would have won them would have saved *The Society Butterfly* from failure and Buchanan from bankruptcy.

Out of doors I rarely saw Robert Buchanan without a white waistcoat and never without an umbrella. He wielded his umbrella as his Scotch ancestors wielded their battle-axes.

It was the oddest thing in the world to see him directing a rehearsal with that umbrella. He leaned upon it as a support, he waved it around, generally unfolded, to indicate positions on the stage, he swayed it gently to and fro during the sentimental scenes, and he banged it on the prompter's table to emphasize the declamatory passages.

He was quite a good stage-manager in his own dreamy and poetical plays, but at the Adelphi, where we painted real life in vivid colours, his ideas did not always harmonize with those of the "producer."

In *The English Rose* we had real soldiers from Chelsea Barracks. The men were under the command of a real sergeant.

"Now," said Buchanan to the sergeant, "what you've got to say to your men is: 'Enter that church.'"

"Can't do it that way," said the sergeant, and he proceeded to give the military command, which the men obeyed and entered the church.

Buchanan had them back. "Speak the line," he said. "Say to your men, 'Enter that church.'"

"It wouldn't be military, sir," said the sergeant.

Then the Bard flourished his umbrella and said, "All right, then."

But he was not convinced, for that night when we adjourned as usual to Rule's, in Maiden Lane, for a few minutes' rest and refreshment, he started the argument again, and maintained with many bangs of the umbrella that he was right.

But in his home he was the gentlest and most amiable of men, though some of us, and we were generally a fairly large party at his hospitable supper-board, loved to draw him out by contradicting him.

Those evenings at Merkland in Maresfield Gardens, South Hampstead—he named his house after the Scotch home of the loved companion of his youth, David Gray—lasted till far into the night, and it was often between three and four in the morning before our host bade us adieu.

The Merkland Sunday afternoons were always interesting because interesting people came from near and far to them.

Rochefort was a frequent visitor. I knew Rochefort as a near neighbour—he lived at No. 4 Clarence Terrace—and I used to see his two horses led every morning to the front door to be fed by him and his niece with lumps of sugar.

The horses used to step half-way into the hall, and on one occasion one of them, when the sugar supply gave out early and Rochefort went for some more, followed him into the dining-room.

Rochefort asked me one day to take him to see something that was peculiarly English in the way of amusement, and I took him to the Moore and Burgess Minstrels. I fancy Ivan Caryl and M. Johnson, the London correspondent of the *Figaro*, were with us. The performance left Rochefort in a condition of amused amazement. "It's wonderful!" he said to me. "A company of undertakers singing songs about the dead, and then the undertakers at each end begin to rattle

cross-bones! I expected every minute to see the undertaker in the middle bang a skull."

Rochefort never learned English. He told me that it would spoil his style. And he never put the articles he sent to his paper in the post. They were always handed to the conductor of the Paris Mail at Charing Cross and in this way they travelled by hand until they were met at the Gare du Nord by a special messenger from the newspaper office. At least that was what Rochefort told me.

Fierce fighter as he was in his work, there was no more modest or less self-assertive man among his friends and guests than was Robert Buchanan.

He was at his best when the day's work was done and the night was well on its way and he sat with a cigarette between his lips and John Jameson by his side and smiled and laughed and listened.

He had many beliefs—one of them was in the Salvation Army as a fighting force for the uplifting of the masses—and he had one abiding superstition.

He imparted his superstition to me during a trip we had made to Southend. We were writing a play together. Buchanan was a bit run down, and suggested that we should take a week-end off together.

He had lived once near Southend, and his wife lay in the little churchyard there.

One moonlight night as we sat looking across the water he told me of a work upon which he had been engaged for many years. It was finished, but he feared to have it printed.

"I believe," he said, "that when that poem is published it will be my last. I shall never do anything great again."

The poem was eventually published. It was the last great work he ever gave to the world.

One afternoon he said to his sister-in-law, Miss Jay, "I should like to have a good spin down Regent Street."

They were the last words Robert Buchanan ever uttered. A few moments afterwards he was stricken down, and from that day to the day of his death, eight months later, he was as helpless as a little child.

He was buried at Southend with his wife and his mother. After the funeral service we adjourned to a small building in

the churchyard, and there the poet's old friend, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, delivered a brief and touching address, and carried us back to the old days of poverty and struggle when two young Scotsmen, poets both and enthusiasts both—Robert Buchanan and David Gray—starved in a garret in Stamford Street.

Some time ago I went into the little churchyard at Southend and stood by my old friend's grave. Over it is a marble pedestal, and on the pedestal a bust of the poet. Across the bust a spider had spun its web. There were cobwebs in the marble eyes.

It was through a web that the dead genius had looked upon the world, but through that web he had seen glorious visions. How glorious they were his generation did not know.

But in the years to come the laurels denied him in life will be laid upon his tomb.

CHAPTER XXIV

THERE are theatres to-day in which it is considered artistic to conceal the band.

Sometimes the orchestra is roofed over with artificial foliage, and you gaze down from the upper parts of the house upon an arrangement which looks like an artfully prepared pitfall for the scouts of an invading army.

This innovation deprives an audience of a long familiar sight—the back of the musical conductor.

Many of our best known musical conductors have been composers, and the majority of our conductors have been originally members of an orchestra.

The first musical conductor with whom I was theatrically associated in business was an amiable little German—I conclude he was a German because his name was Max Schroter. He was at the Royalty, and when I wrote, under the name of Delacour Daubigny, a one-act musical play for the Vaudeville, Max Schroter was my composer.

Michael Connolly, who wrote and arranged the music for *The Lights o' London*, was a fine *chef d'orchestre* and a charming man. His music talked. It always had the sentiment of the scene.

Another excellent *chef d'orchestre* for melodramatic music was Henry Sprake, who was for many years at the Adelphi. He had been a military bandsman, and his incidental music for *In the Ranks* was a decided asset.

Everybody knows Jimmy Glover, the eminent Master of Music at Drury Lane, who, in every sense of the word, fills the conductor's chair at the National Theatre.

But when Jimmy Glover and I first came together I was slim, and he was slimmer. He was a tall, thin young fellow, with longish hair, a wasp-like waist, a slight stoop, and a pleasant manner, with now and then a boisterous dash of Irish exuberance.

He composed most of the music for *Jack in the Box*, a musical play written by Clement Scott and myself for Fanny Leslie and played at the Strand. We became friends at the merry little Strand in the early 'eighties, and we have been friends as author and composer and as brother journalists ever since.

Jules Rivière, who came back to the Alhambra for *The Golden Ring*, had won renown with the promenade concerts and had made fame with *Babil and Bijou*. It was a costly affair, produced at Covent Garden in August 1872, written by Dion Boucicault and Planché, and financed by a noble patron of the stage.

Rivière's chorus of "Spring, Spring, Gentle Spring!" sung by boys, was the sensation of the celebrated "Fantastic musical drama," and has lived. Hervé and Frederic Clay wrote some of the music for the eleven thousand pound production, and Helen Barry and Henriette d'Or graced the cast, and so did Mrs. Howard Paul and Mrs. Billington, and Lal Brough was the principal comedian.

Babil was played by Joseph Maas, who was making his first appearance and getting a salary of twelve pounds a week. It was not very long afterwards that he raised his terms to fifty pounds a night.

Miss Annie Sinclair, a dainty light soprano, was Bijou. She was also making her first appearance, and her salary, like that of Maas, was twelve pounds a week.

Shortly after the run of *Babil and Bijou* Annie Sinclair undertook a part which was quite an unconventional one for a young and pretty actress who had just made a highly successful debut. She resigned the Stage for the Church and entered a convent.

I remember Jules Rivière in semi-military array conducting an orchestra at Eastbourne which I always understood was "supported" by Baron Grant, who afterwards gave Leicester Square to the public.

The story of Leicester Square is a story by itself, and so is the story of Baron Grant, whose magnificent "Staircase of Fortune" is now the grand staircase at Madame Tussaud's.

The Square, which had become a boarded-up rubbish ground, received its final insult on the morning of October 17,

1866, when the disgracefully damaged equestrian statue of George II was turned into a Guy Fawkes effigy.

The battered-featured monarch's head was adorned with a fool's cap, and the white steed was daubed all over with black spots.

Certain members of the Alhambra staff have always been suspected of playing a practical joke which set all London laughing. The joke settled the statue and proved the salvation of the Square.

Baron Albert Grant, then at the height of his financial boom, bought the square, removed the statue of the shattered sovereign, substituted that of Shakespeare, and threw the space open to the public.

The famous financier was under a cloud some time afterwards, and it was apropos of his questionable commercial morality that a well-known epigram was perpetrated :

*Kings can give titles, but they Honour can't ;
Rank without Honour is a barren grant,*

or words to that effect. I do not know that I have given the last line quite accurately, but that was the sense of it.

Hamilton Clarke was for some time Irving's conductor at the Lyceum. He had a genius for orchestration, but he was "peculiar." He arranged a selection from *The Merry Duchess* for the promenade concerts at Covent Garden, and omitted the Tigers' Chorus, the musical success of the opera. When Clay remonstrated with him, Hamilton Clarke told him that he had omitted it because, as a musician, he did not think it worthy of Clay's talent.

When Clarke was at the Lyceum, Irving wanted a few bars to bring him down stage. Clarke wrote the music and played it. Irving reached the desired spot, but the music was still going on.

"I've finished," said Irving.

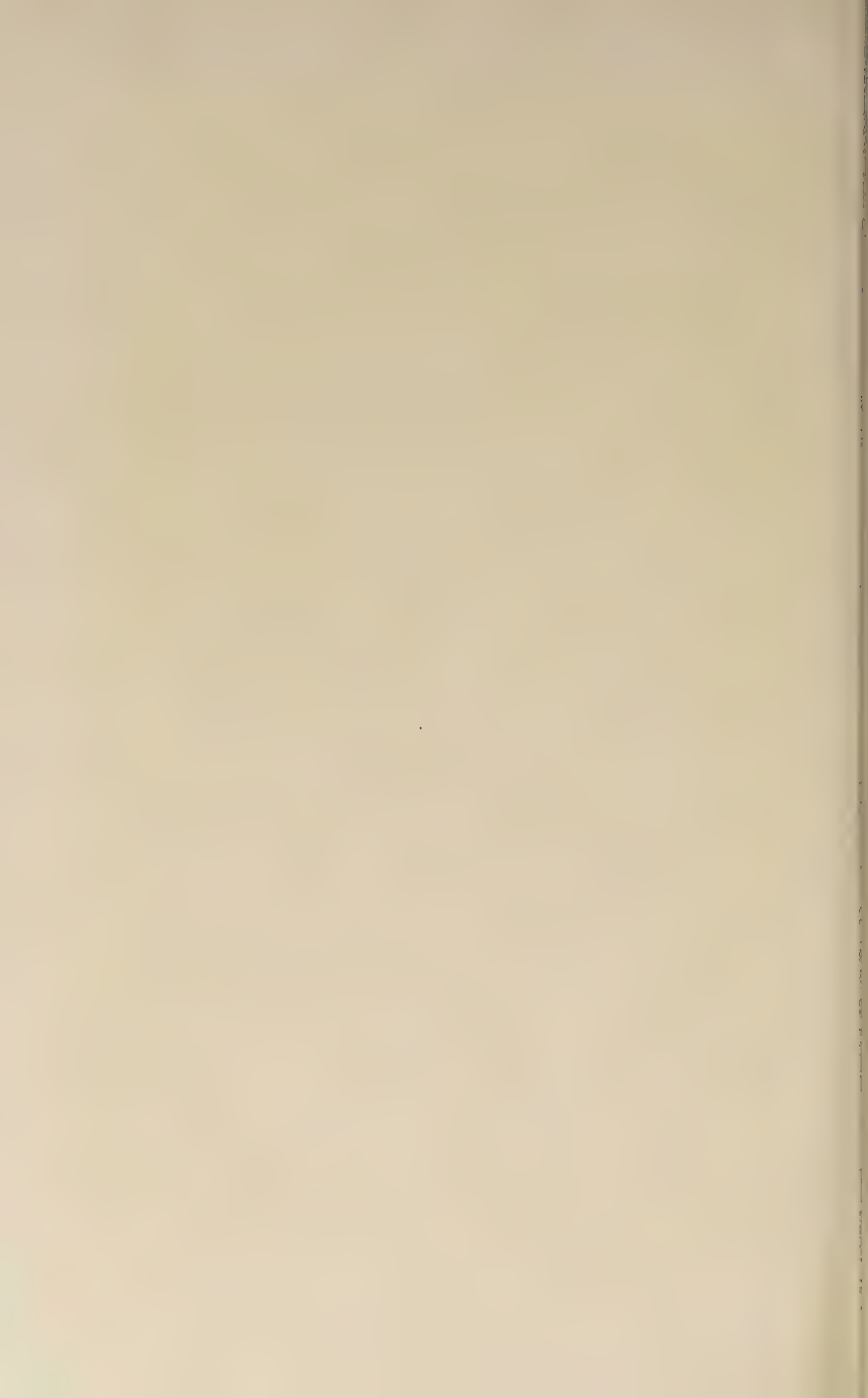
"But my music hasn't," replied Clarke. "You must time yourself to it."

Poor Hamilton Clarke was always a bit "touched." Later on the trouble developed seriously, and the conductor's chair knew him no more.

Jules Rivi re came back to the Alhambra to be the musical



BARON GRANT



conductor at the time *The Golden Ring*, by Frederic Clay and myself, was produced.

After poor Clay's seizure I was frequently at the Alhambra looking after *The Golden Ring*, and I saw a good deal of Rivière, who had all the charm of the Bohemian Frenchman with a touch at times of the old-fashioned grand manner.

Rivière in his room at the Alhambra told me many interesting stories of his musical ventures and adventures. He was the musical conductor at the Adelphi during the run of *The Colleen Bawn*, and also when *Leah* was produced there and Kate Bateman made one of the most pronounced theatrical successes of the time.

He was at Cremorne when John Baum was the manager, and that was where I first made his acquaintance.

Writing of Baum, I remember that behind one of the big glass-fitted stalls of the Alhambra that were run by him there was a tall, good-looking young lady who presided over the sale of gloves and scent. She became a famous and charming actress later on, and was the guest of Alfred Tennyson, the Poet Laureate, when he was writing a play for her—a play which had a memorable first night and a short run.

It was while Rivière was at Cremorne that the Gardens lost their dancing licence, so Rivière increased his band, engaged a number of first-class musicians, and produced a ballet in the theatre. But the dancing on the stage didn't draw like the dancing in the Gardens, and at the end of the season Rivière left.

But while he was there in 1872 the members of his orchestra were victims of an extraordinary adventure.

A French millionaire amateur had written a cantata, *Le Feu du Ciel*, and he wanted to produce it in London. Rivière agreed to look after the performance, to supply the orchestra, and to conduct it.

It was produced at a matinée at St. James's Hall, Madame Lemmens-Sherrington, Mr. George Perrin, and Signor Foli taking the solo parts.

Rivière brought his band from Cremorne, the instruments being conveyed in a covered van. After the performance the instruments were put in the van again to be taken back to Cremorne.

When he got into the King's Road, Chelsea, the driver suddenly discovered that the van was on fire. He had only just time to cut the traces and save his horses when the van burst into flames. All the instruments of Rivière's Cremorne orchestra were destroyed.

"How the fire originated," said Rivière, when he was telling me the story, "we were never able to discover. It was as though *The Fire of Heaven* in which the instruments had taken part had played its part in the van with realistic effects."

Harking back to *Babil and Bijou*—old playgoers are always harking back to it—Rivière had a curious experience.

After "Spring, Gentle Spring" had been published by Hawkes and Co., a firm of which Rivière was a member, a woman applied one day at a police court for a summons against the publishers. She informed the magistrate that she was the composer of the song; that while she was travelling between Germany and London the manuscript had been stolen from her.

The magistrate told the lady she had better consult a solicitor, and she went away. The report of the application appeared in all the daily papers, and Rivière at once published an indignant denial of the theft. The clerk of the court had, it seems, omitted to take the applicant's address, and so Rivière could do nothing to bring her to book. But he offered a reward for information which would lead to her identification, and eventually she was discovered in a poor lodging, and almost destitute.

She was undoubtedly insane, and shortly afterwards was placed in a lunatic asylum.

Rivière's ambition when he came to England was to be the Jullien of his day. He had an artistic and successful career, and he gave great promenade concerts like Jullien, but he escaped the tragedy of the closing scenes of Jullien's life.

Jullien left a big reputation behind him in the entertainment world when he quitted London in 1858. But he had already begun to show symptoms of insanity.

Just before he went away Jullien came to Rivière and said: "My friend, I am at work upon a composition which when

published will bear the two greatest names in history." He then showed Rivière a paper upon which he had written :

" The Lord's Prayer.

Words by
Jesus Christ,
Music by
Jullien."

Soon afterwards the mad musician went to Paris. He hired an open fly and drove about the boulevards. Every now and then he ordered the driver to pull up. Then he stood up in the carriage, informed the crowd that he was the great Jullien, took a piccolo from his pocket, and played it.

Shortly afterwards he cut his throat in a side street turning out of the Chaussée d'Antin.

The tragedy made a great sensation in London. Jullien's promenade concerts, masked balls, and musical enterprises had been established features of gay, pleasure-loving London in the 'fifties, when the motto of the many was :

*The best of all ways
To lengthen your days
Is to steal a few hours from night, my boys.*

And the West End was gayest and noisiest after midnight, the " gents " in peg-top trousers and wonderful whiskers revelled in the streets, bonneted policemen, rang bells and wrenched off knockers on their way home from Cremorne, Highbury Barn, Jullien's masked balls, or the night houses of the Haymarket at " five o'clock in the morning."

After Jullien's tragic end Chatterton gave Madame Jullien, the widow, a place in the Drury Lane box-office, a box-office that had one of its most famous personalities in " Jimmy " Stride, whose glossy high hat was the delight of a generation.

CHAPTER XXV

Two other clever musicians of French extraction gave us at a later period the benefit of their great talents.

Alfred and Frank Cellier were the sons of a French school-master at Hackney Church of England school kept by the Rev. I. C. Jackson, M.A. Frank Cellier spent the best years of his life in the conductor's chair at the Savoy, and will always be associated with the D'Oyly Carte regime and the long series of Gilbert and Sullivan triumphs.

Frank Cellier knew perhaps better than any one except Frederic Clay, who was Sullivan's most intimate friend and constant companion, where the shoe pinched in the collaboration, and why at one time the collaborators fell seriously apart.

One day, soon after Gilbert and Sullivan returned from America, Sir Arthur unbosomed his soul to Clay.

He had the idea that Gilbert delighted to make a butt of him. He had borne it patiently in London but in America the personal chaff of the Savoy humorist had—especially when it was indulged in at social functions where they were the honoured guests—seriously upset the kindly hearted and gentle-mannered musician.

Sullivan told Clay that he did not think he should be able to stand it much longer.

Eventually, to the great grief and surprise of all play-going London, the breach which had been rapidly widening between the famous Savoyards divided them altogether, and Sullivan sought a new librettist and Gilbert a new composer.

Neither of them ever quite replaced the other, and after a time they came together again, but not quite in the old way or with the old success.

Alfred Cellier, like Arthur Sullivan, was a choir-boy at one of the Chapels Royal. When Sullivan conducted the pro-

menade concerts for the Gattis at Covent Garden Alfred Cellier was his assistant. He had a genial, gentle personality, and might have given the music-loving world far more than he did had he not suffered from a lack of what to-day we call "push and go."

His first big success was *The Sultan of Mocha*, played at the St. James's in 1876. One number especially, "O dear me, I am so sleepy!" caught the town.

It was shortly after that that I met him at the club, and he told me that he wanted a libretto. Would I let him have a copy of "Les Contes Drolatiques." He thought there might be a plot for a comic opera in it.

I heard nothing more for some months, and then he returned the book.

It was ten years after *The Sultan of Mocha* that he made a success which was a record one. With B. C. Stephenson he gave us *Dorothy* at the Gaiety in 1886, and it ran for 968 consecutive performances, has been revived again and again, and is still on the active service list.

But a good deal of the music had been composed by Cellier ten years previously for another opera called *Nell Gwynne*, with a libretto by H. B. Farnie, which was not a great success.

It was in *Dorothy* that Arthur Williams was taken seriously to task by B. C. Stephenson, the librettist, who pointed out to the popular comedian that his gags were not suitable to a "period" opera.

Williams promised to mend his ways, and soon afterwards Stephenson went out of town, and Arthur Williams promptly popped in some new gags.

One evening in a scene with Harriet Coveney he exclaimed, "Do you take me for a blooming sewing-machine?" At that moment he looked up and caught the indignant eye of B. C. Stephenson in a private box. Instantly, with his remarkable fertility of resource, he rushed the offending gag back into "period" by adding the word "forsooth."

Herman Finck, the Master of Music at the Palace, the composer who plunged the world *In the Shadows*, was second violin at the Gaiety during the run of *Faust Up-to-date*.

For several years I was associated with Mr. Charles Fletcher

in writing the annual ballet for the Winter Gardens, Blackpool.

The Blackpool ballets, as invented, arranged, and produced by Mr. John Tiller, are magnificent productions. They are ballet, musical comedy, and spectacle rolled into one harmonious whole.

The music for the Blackpool ballets with which I was associated was written by Herman Finck, and we generally spent the last week of sunny July together at the Wonderland by the Waves.

I have always looked upon myself as the Cockney Columbus who discovered Blackpool—that is to say, who discovered it for the people of the south. The northern counties had poured their wealth of men and material into it for many long years past.

I discovered it quite by accident. I got into the wrong train at Preston and found myself at Blackpool. I strolled about, and I found the Winter Gardens, went in, and the first person I met was William Holland of the prize moustaches.

He was the manager of the Gardens at the time, and he took me about Blackpool, and, as the result of my trip, I wrote an article on the wonders of the Northern Hygeia.

My good friends of the south coast towns accused me of drawing the long bow, but one of the leading south coast journals sent a special representative to Blackpool to see if it was really true. The journalist who went was accompanied by a couple of town councillors, and the mission returned with a report that I had really understated the marvels of Blackpool.

I had stated that during the autumn season five thousand artists were employed in Blackpool in entertaining visitors. The special mission discovered that the number of artists was not five thousand, but eight thousand.

Herman Finck is one of the eight thousand, but he only appears once during the season, and then the audience only sees his back. He conducts the last dress rehearsal of the new ballet.

After a week's hard work in Blackpool it was our custom to spend an hour on the mountain railway on the South Shore, which had become a second Coney Island, visit all the

shows, have a real Bank Holiday, and catch the night train home.

Jacobi and the Alhambra were at one time synonymous. He had to conduct and to write so many ballets a year.

He was always a friend of mine, and we worked together on an opera which never saw the footlights. But it took me frequently to his room at the Alhambra, and there he introduced me to two celebrated Frenchmen. One was General Boulanger and the other was M. Goron, the chief of the Paris Detective Force.

Goron was over here in connexion with the Gouffé murder by Gabrielle Bompard and Eyraud. The trunk in which the body of the murdered process-server had been packed bore the name of a maker in the Euston Road.

I showed M. Goron a little bit of London while he was here, and when I crossed the Channel later he returned the compliment. He showed me a little bit of Paris.

Boulanger I had seen in Paris before Jacobi introduced me to him at the Alhambra. I saw him first one New Year's morning when his brougham was in the courtyard of the Hôtel du Louvre waiting to take him to pay the usual official calls.

I noticed that there was a double set of reins, one for the coachman and the other a safety set attached to the coachman's seat, and I made up my mind that the brave General was a very nervous man. He lived then at the Hôtel du Louvre, and I had the suite of rooms next to him.

Boulanger was the pioneer of the war of revenge, the leader of the anti-German movement in France. The people who shouted "A bas les Prussiens!" shouted "Vive Boulanger!" But during the time that he was being hailed as the coming deliverer of Alsace-Lorraine from the Prussian yoke he was in constant contact with a Prussian.

It was a Prussian who brought him his coffee to his bedroom in the Hôtel du Louvre in the morning. It was a Prussian who waited on him at dinner, and who introduced all his visitors to him.

Heinrich, my waiter, who also waited on the General, was a native of Magdeburg, though he passed for a Swiss, and many a time did he make me laugh by his amusing remarks

on the situation "next door," next door being the General's apartment.

The last time I saw Boulanger was one evening in Portland Place. It was his birthday, and a small crowd of Frenchmen from Soho had gathered around the door.

Boulanger came out on the doorstep, made a little speech, and begged them to go away and not make a noise, as it might annoy the neighbours.

Soon afterwards he left London and went abroad, and the next news I had of *le brav' Général* was that he had committed suicide in a Brussels cemetery at the grave of Madame Bonnemains, a lady to whom he was devotedly attached.

Boulanger was War Minister in 1886, and before then and after then he was the tool of the Bonapartists and the Orleanists, who used him in order to damage the Republic.

But he was never the man for the job, and he only succeeded in damaging himself, badly at first, and finally beyond repair.

John Fitzgerald—"Fitz" of the sunny 'seventies, who followed Frank Musgrave in wielding the baton in the merriest days of the merry little Strand—was, I fancy, my first composer. I wrote a song entitled "Old England and our Queen," and got a guinea for it.

Fitzgerald lived in Burton Crescent, and I always remember the address because there was a great murder mystery close by.

In December 1878, an old lady named Samuel, who lived at a house in Burton Crescent and kept no servant, took a lodger, although she was of independent means.

The lodger was a musician in an orchestra. He was away most of the daytime and did not return until after midnight, when a supper was generally laid for him in his sitting-room.

On December 11 the musician returned from the theatre shortly after midnight, let himself in, went to his room, and was astonished to find no supper laid.

He rang the bell and received no answer. Concluding that Mrs. Samuel must have gone out he went downstairs to see if he could get anything in the kitchen, and there to his horror he discovered the body of Mrs. Samuel lying in a pool of blood.

He called the police at once, a doctor came and viewed the body, and it was found that the old lady had been battered

to death with the fragment of a hat-rail on which several of the pegs still remained. The pocket of her dress had been cut off and a pair of boots was missing, but apparently no other property.

There was a maid who worked about the house in the daytime, going home in the evening. This maid had left at four o'clock in the afternoon and had then left her mistress alive and well.

Three workmen had been employed in the house doing some repairs, and they had also left during the afternoon and Mrs. Samuel had let them out. The probability is that Mrs. Samuel was murdered early in the evening, but by whom is a mystery to this day.

I wrote an opera with Walter Slaughter—at least I nearly finished it and he nearly finished the music, but he was very ill at the time, and though he put a brave face on it he was often in great pain when he wrote some of his most tuneful melodies.

Walter Slaughter, who made several great financial and artistic successes, among them *A French Maid* at the Vaudeville and *Gentleman Joe*, written for Arthur Roberts, and *Orlando Dando*, written for Dan Leno, all with Captain Basil Hood, was in his early days the pianist at the South London Music Hall.

Connie Gilchrist was at the South London in Poole's time, and it was there that John Hollingshead first heard Mr. E. J. Dallas and brought him to the Gaiety to become one of its most famous comedians.

Walter Slaughter, when we were working together, generally came to see me on Sunday afternoons, when he was well enough. He always brought a new number and occasionally a wine bottle filled with a wonderful scent which he told me he distilled himself.

He was a great sufferer at the finish and had a variety of ailments, but he was good-humoured and smiling almost to the end.

My collaboration with Ivan Caryll was a happy one. There was always a joy in life about Caryll that was contagious. He assumed the name of Ivan, but I never heard any one call him anything but Felix, which is his real first name, and Tilkin is his real surname.

May Yohe used to call him Felix when we were rehearsing *Little Christopher Columbus* at the Lyric, and he had a pleasant way of preventing her saying anything rude to him. Miss Yohe was charming in *Little Christopher*, and a great personal success, but she *could* be rude if she didn't get just what she wanted.

Sir Henry Wood and Mr. Landon Ronald are to-day world-famous as conductors. But when Henry Wood was the *chef d'orchestre* at the Trafalgar Theatre and May Yohe was the leading lady—the opera was *Mademoiselle Nitouche*—the leading lady told the *chef d'orchestre* one day at rehearsal that he couldn't conduct for nuts!

I wrote *Dandy Dick Whittington* for May Yohe when she had left Horace Sedger, and Messrs. Greet and Engelbach had taken the Avenue Theatre, now the Playhouse, for her. And the *chef d'orchestre* for *Dandy Dick Whittington* was Mr. Landon Ronald.

What Miss Yohe told Landon Ronald he couldn't conduct for I never heard. But I fancy he had a trying time, and bore it with the amiability which is one of his many charming characteristics.

It was at the Winter Gardens at Blackpool that I first met Clarence C. Corri. He followed another favourite composer, Mr. John Crook, the composer of *The Lady Slavey*, Mr. George Dance's great success, in the conductorship of the orchestra at the Theatre Royal, Manchester.

Corri and I wrote *The Dandy Fifth* for Hardie and Von Leer. It is still alive, and the song, "A Little British Army goes a — Long Way" is still in the band "selection."

I find it hard to resist the temptation of printing the following letter which the managers who were giving *The Dandy Fifth* its first production at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Birmingham, received, dated from the Lord Chamberlain's Office, in April 1898:

"DEAR SIR,—My best congratulations to every one concerned. It is really quite refreshing to read a comic libretto which is amusing, consistent, and witty, without an objectionable word from start to finish. My friend G. R. Sims has

discovered how to please the greatest number and offend none.

"Yours truly,

"G. A. REDFORD."

As I have had this letter in my possession for nearly twenty years and this is the first time I have published it, I hope I may be forgiven.

With Sir Arthur Sullivan I only worked once, and then it was for about half an hour.

After poor Freddy Clay's seizure on the second night of the new Alhambra spectacular comic opera, *The Golden Ring*, it was decided that certain alterations were advisable in the score.

Rivière did not care to interfere with Clay's work, and I suggested that I should take it to Sir Arthur Sullivan, who knew all about it, as Clay had been away with him at Carlsbad for the cure, and had been at work on the opera during the time.

I took the score to Sullivan, and had a short and rather sad little conference, for Sullivan was as deeply distressed at the tragedy as I was.

Sir Arthur gladly undertook to do the necessary work there and then, and told me that if Rivière would come and see him the next day everything would be ready.

I saw a great deal of Arthur Sullivan in the winter season at Monte Carlo, and on several occasions I lunched with him at a charming little villa which he had taken at Roquebrune, an environ of the Paradise.

One moonlight night he had driven over from Roquebrune, and when I met him in the rooms he told me that he had seen four gendarmes struggling with two armed bandits who had just tried to hold up the carriage of an Italian count, who was in the habit of driving to the Casino every night with his pockets filled with bank-notes. I congratulated the eminent composer upon the fact that the bandits had been captured before his carriage came along.

Shortly before midnight I met Sir Arthur on the terrace.

"Well," he said, "the other bandits might as well have had my money. The bandits here have had seven hundred of the best out of me this evening. I've lost every note I brought with me."

"Never mind, there are plenty more notes where they came from," I replied.

Sir Arthur must have enjoyed the joke and repeated it, for it came to me in my Press cuttings many times afterwards, and in a little book called "*Anecdotes of Monte Carlo*" the story is told with one or two additions of which I was not guilty.

Sullivan told me one day when I was at the villa that he had had a curious experience. He was doing a good deal of work in the daytime and was rather annoyed by some youths who in their luncheon hour used to have a little Monte Carlo of their own just outside his garden.

Sullivan said to the man who was working in the garden, "Look here, if you can't get rid of these lads, I shall have to complain to the mayor."

Then the gardener raised his hat proudly and said in the patois, "Sir, I am the Mayor of Roquebrune."

With Auguste Van Biene I had pleasant and profitable business relations for many years. He toured *Carmen Up-to-Data* and other musical pieces in which I was concerned, and I was writing a piece for him to take the place of the famous *Broken Melody* when he died.

Van Biene came a boy from his home in Holland to the city paved with gold, but before long he found that for him it was not even paved with silver.

He had failed to get a living, and he had come to a bare garret with his 'cello for his only companion.

One day he heard a girl singing in the street, and he saw the people fling her coppers. He was at the time penniless and desperately hungry.

He went to his garret, took his 'cello, put his pride in his pocket, and played in the street, and made seven shillings.

That day he dined.

A day or two afterwards he was playing in a side street off Regent Street and a gentleman passing by stopped and listened.

Presently the gentleman said, "What are you playing in the street for?"

"Because I am hungry," replied the young musician.

The gentleman took out a card and gave it to the performer.

"Come and see me at this address to-morrow," he said, and walked away.

The young musician looked at the card. The name upon it was "Michael Costa."

The next day Van Biene got his first good engagement in London. There were many ups and downs after that, but he had started on the road to fame and fortune.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE year 1889 was to see me involved in two exciting affairs, in both of which I had to defend myself against a false statement.

I have at various periods of my life had a double. One of my earliest doubles was Mr. John Heslop, at one time manager of the Opera Comique, where he produced my *Mother-in-Law*, and also manager of the Gaiety Theatre, Glasgow. On two occasions Mr. Heslop took first-night calls for me when I was unable to be present, and only the company knew that the "understudy" was bowing for the author.

Another double of mine was Mr. Charles Bertram, the conjurer, who was frequently stopped in the streets and addressed by my name.

But in 1889 I had a double, not in form and feature, but in name, and the double was the cause of the trouble.

At the beginning of June 1889 I returned from a brief holiday in Switzerland to find that in my absence I had been assaulted by the Duke of Cambridge, and that the assault of the Duke upon "Mr. George Sims, journalist, and a member of the staff of a Sunday paper," had been the subject of a question in the House of Commons.

The assault, it seemed, had taken place when the Duke was at a review of the Fire Brigade at Whitehall, at which the Prince and Princess of Wales were present.

There had been a rush of the crowd, and in that rush Mr. George Sims, the journalist, had been pushed against the Duke of Cambridge, and the fiery Duke had seized the journalist by the throat and shaken him "like a rat."

As I happened at the time of the assault to have been on the summit of Pilatus I could not understand how the Duke, even if his arm had been longer than that of coincidence, had reached so far as from Whitehall to the summit of the mountain

where is the tarn in which Pontius Pilate is supposed to have drowned himself.

When I found certain provincial newspapers giving a short account of my life and work in connexion with the Commander-in-Chief's attack upon me, I was compelled to write a disclaimer to the daily papers.

Shortly afterwards I found that the following paragraph had gone round the American Press :

G. R. Sims has surpassed all the actors who rescue drowning children, and all the actresses who lose invaluable diamonds, by working up a tremendous theatrical advertisement. He has had the Duke of Cambridge arrested for assaulting him. There was a crowd at a fire ; Sims, who is ill and weak, was pushed up against the Royal Duke, who is old but stalwart, and the Duke seized Sims by the throat. Our sympathies are with Sims. But then, perhaps the Duke recognized Sims as Dagonet of the *Referee*, who is always gibing at him and his umbrella, and clutched this opportunity to get even. It is an immense advertisement for Sims, and ought to pack the Adelphi Theatre as long as Sims can put pen to paper, or his name to a melodrama.

It was some time before I was able to convince the sympathetic American Press that the assault had not been committed upon me, but upon Mr. George E. Simms, a young journalist on the staff of the *Sunday Sun*.

In the meantime the affair had assumed sensational proportions. Mr. Simms had applied for a summons at a police-court, and the magistrate had refused to listen to his application.

Then Mr. Abinger, on behalf of Mr. Simms, went before the Lord Chief Justice and Mr. Justice Hawkins for an order calling upon Mr. Bridge, a Metropolitan police magistrate, to show cause why he should not hear and determine Mr. Simms's application, and after a long and legal argument the Lord Chief Justice decided that Mr. Bridge had not exercised the discretion which he was bound to exercise judicially, and therefore the rule must be granted, and Mr. Justice Hawkins concurred.

Then the American Press, still believing that I was the Sims, favoured me with columns of sympathy. One leading journal headlined its article, "Royalty Under Arrest; Queen Victoria's cousin, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Empire, must answer in a police-court for an assault upon George R. Sims, the well-known journalist and dramatic author."

Canadian and Australian journals rallied to my banner. The *Ottawa Evening Journal* gave me a two-column leader, in the course of which it said:

"George R. Sims has claims to respect and public gratitude beside which those of the Duke of Cambridge dwindle pitifully. His sympathies, his industry, and his ability have always been at the service of the poor and oppressed. As Dagonet, of the *Referee*, he has kept a warm heart and a ready pen for the welfare of his fellow-beings. Apart from this, his plays have given delight to hundreds of thousands the world over."

And all this beautiful sympathy was unfortunately wasted. I was not the Sims.

A year or two afterwards I was introduced to the Duke at one of the Earl's Court exhibitions, and he evidently remembered the affair, for he smilingly said, "I think you are the George Sims I did *not* assault?"

Apropos of this exhibition, here is a true story. The Duke was the President of the Honorary Advisory Committee. One blazing day in July he decided to attend a committee, so he telegraphed to the manager, "Shall be with you at two o'clock. Warm all offices."

The Duke arrived and took the chair. Behind him a large fire was blazing away.

The Duke fidgeted in his chair for a minute or two, then he suddenly exclaimed, "What the devil do you want with fires on a day like this?"

Then the manager produced the telegram. The Duke read it and burst into a roar of laughter.

"It's the fools at the telegraph office," he said. "What my secretary wrote in my presence was, 'Warn all officers.'"

On November 30, 1889, there was produced at the Princess's

Theatre a drama written by Brandon Thomas, who was some years afterwards to give us *Charley's* immortal *Aunt*.

The drama at the Princess's was called *The Gold Craze*. One of the characters in the play was described as "The Baron de Fleurville." He was a foreign adventurer of a particularly shady kind.

The fact that a Baron de Fleurville was to be a character in the new play at the Princess's reached the ears of M. le Marquis de Leuville, a poet and painter whose fame was not on a par with his physical proportions, but who was always as eager for publicity as the guests at the boarding-house of Mrs. Todgers were always eager for gravy.

De Leuville was a well-known London character in the 'eighties. His appearance was something between a fat French poet of the Quartier Latin and the overblown middle-aged tenor of romantic opera in the 'sixties.

He had chambers in the Albany and an office in Baker Street, where there was a brass plate on the downstairs front door which bore his name and that of his "literary secretary"; and he was in constant attendance on a wealthy golden-haired widow who had passed *la quarantaine*.

Rumour had it that de Leuville's real name was Tom Oliver, that he was born in Bath, and that he had been valet to a nobleman in France; but rumour has always been busy with noblemen who lead romantic lives and write "the poetry of the passions."

As a matter of fact, his name was Redivivus Oliver, and his mother was a clever water-colour artist who married again, and his stepfather was a well-to-do solicitor in a country town. The story of his being a valet is probably untrue.

When he was a young man and travelling in Italy he sent word to his stepfather that he was captured by brigands in Italy, and that a certain sum must be sent for his ransom. The money was forthcoming, but it went into Oliver's pockets. The brigands were a myth.

Later on he is said to have married a rich wife. They lived together in Paris, and the wife bought a small estate, and from that estate Redivivus Oliver assumed the name of the Marquis de Leuville, but when he burst upon London as

poet, painter, and *littérateur* rumour at once became busy with his past.

The Marquis de Leuville doubtless shrugged his shoulders at rumour as an earlier nobleman-poet, Lord Byron, did.

So he painted and wrote passionate verse and published it in volumes illustrated by himself, and sent the volumes broadcast to the Press and to his friends, and in each of the volumes there was generally a poem addressed to a lady who bore the same Christian name as the golden-haired widow of wealth. The Marquis was also occasionally in the habit of making a more or less public appearance as a reciter.

Some little time before the production of *The Gold Craze* he sent me a volume of his verses entitled "Entre Nous," with a preface in which he dwelt upon his French ancestry and the difficulty a member of the old French *noblesse* found in expressing his thoughts in the English tongue.

"The Albany, W.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Will you allow me to add one more voice of admiration about your charmingly dramatic poems? I am going to try to do justice to those which are adapted to my particular style of recitation, which perhaps you may have indistinctly heard of. I have only 'The Dagonet Ballads' and 'The Ballads of Babylon,' having unfortunately mislaid the other one I had containing 'Sir Hugh's (?) Leap,' which is more the sort of thing that suits me, for I'm not quite up to the pointsmen and miners, and do them badly.

"So might I ask you to be so very good as to tell your different publishers of 'Dagonet' and 'Babylon.' My private secretary will send you some of my words, poor indeed in comparison with yours, but they might give you an idea of the sort of thing I recite, and you might have something adapted to me during the forthcoming season.

"Yours faithfully,

"LEUVILLE."

Now for *The Gold Craze*. The Marquis had, it seems, received information that not only was the character of the de Fleurville intended to be a caricature of himself, but that

the actor, Mr. J. H. Barnes, who was going to play the part, intended to make up like him.

The Marquis determined to make a public protest against the outrage on a poet and a painter who was one of the old nobility of France.

So he consulted with his friend Captain Hamber, who was at that time the editor of a well-known London daily. What Captain Hamber advised I cannot say, but the Marquis attended the theatre on the night of production and was accompanied by three or four men specifically engaged and paid by the Marquis to create a disturbance and if possible wreck the play.

The Marquis procured three men named Hill, Cronin, and Hadden, and instructed them to go to the Princess's, pay for admission, and when Mr. J. H. Barnes in the character of de Fleurville appeared on the stage to hoot and hiss and make as much disturbance as they could.

Each of these men had with him a certain number of assistants who were to be placed in different parts of the house to join in the clamour.

The result was that something like a riot took place, and the management was compelled to eject the disturbers. Having ascertained the facts, the management charged the Marquis with instigating, inciting, and procuring George Hadden, J. Cronin, Edward Hill, and others to create a riot at the Royal Princess's Theatre on the night of Saturday, November 30. And the Marquis de Leuville duly appeared in Marlborough Street Police Court to answer the charge.

Mr. Geoghegan and Mr. Hutton appeared for the management, and Mr. Gill defended the noble poet and painter and reciter, whose artistic dignity had, so he contended, been insulted by "handsome Jack" Barnes.

I had so far only been interested in the case from the point of view of the public. But suddenly there came a bolt from the blue, and I found that my reputation as a man of honour and as a dramatist was seriously involved in the prosecution which had arisen out of the first-night riot in the house in which I had won my melodramatic spurs with *The Lights o' London*. This is what happened.

The appearance of the fat, broad-shouldered, double-

chinned, Byron-collared, oiled, scented, and bejewelled Marquis de Leuille in the police-court charged with inciting his myrmidons to create a riot at the Princess's Theatre was quite a sensational little event.

For the Marquis had a Press of his own—that is to say, he was in the habit of inviting one or two journalists of sorts who were connected with periodicals of sorts to social functions and garden-parties at the well-known old-world residence of the wealthy widow, and also to “literary and artistic” functions at a flat in Victoria Street, of which he was ostensibly the owner.

And in these ways he managed to obtain a certain amount of publicity for the literary and artistic enterprises of which he was from time to time presumed to be guilty.

I say “presumed,” because it has been fairly well established—look at the composition of his letter to me!—that the Marquis could not put two sentences together in decent English.

The secret of his literary and poetic output was very simple. He kept a poet, and the poet appeared on the brass plate of his poetry offices in Baker Street as the “literary secretary.”

The case of the Marquis and the Management was adjourned and adjourned again and again, and it was all on a wild March morning in 1890, when the Marquis was having another *matinée* at Marlborough Street, that I suddenly found myself involved in it.

The Marquis allowed one of his witnesses, Captain Hamber, to go into the witness-box and say that the man Hill, a compositor, had been selected as one of the rioters because Hill had been introduced to the Marquis “as a very clever fellow who wrote all George R. Sims’s plays for him.”

This statement, made by a witness on oath—a witness who was an honoured member of the Fourth Estate, and who in his time edited three London daily papers—the *Standard*, the short-lived *Hour*, and the *Morning Advertiser*—was a bolt from the blue.

It caused a flutter in the reporters’ box, and among the the audience, which was largely composed of members of the dramatic profession, the effect was startling.

Managers looked at one another with a note of interrogation

in their eyebrows. They had seen Mr. Hill in the witness-box. They had heard that he was a compositor, and he confessed he had accepted a small honorarium to attend a first-night performance and create a disturbance.

And this man Hill was the author of all the plays to which George R. Sims had put his name! Verily the ghost was walking that day. It had walked into the witness-box and revealed itself on oath.

The statement made in the witness-box by Captain Hamber duly appeared in all the reports of the case published in the evening papers and the daily papers the next morning.

The newspapers, I am pleased to say, declined to take the claim of Mr. Hill seriously. Some of them, commenting on the statement of Captain Hamber, quoted interesting instances of men who had falsely pretended to be ghosts, and instanced the case of a clergyman named Lignum, who said that he, and not George Eliot, was the author of "Adam Bede," and actually produced the manuscript of "Adam Bede" in proof of his claim—a proceeding which compelled George Eliot's publishers to produce the manuscript from which "Adam Bede" had been actually printed.

But there was no need for me to produce the manuscript of *The Lights o' London* or *The Romany Rye*. Captain Hamber, after the report of his evidence had appeared in the Press, wrote the following letter to the editor of the *Daily Telegraph*:

"THE SIMS PLAYS

"SIR,—Kindly permit me to say to Mr. Sims, as an old playgoer who has cried at his pathos and laughed at his humour, that it did not enter my head for a moment to take the statement I referred to seriously—I simply mentioned it as a *reductio ad absurdum* of some of the evidence tendered by the prosecution against the Marquis de Leuville.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"THOMAS HAMBER.

"10 Serjeant's Inn, E.C."

How the case against the Marquis terminated I have forgotten, but I have an idea that a settlement took place.

Mr. J. H. Barnes in the course of his evidence, though denying that he made up like the Marquis, admitted that he had seen a likeness of the Marquis some time before the production of the play, and had shown the portrait to Mr. Fox, the theatrical wig-maker.

It is quite common for actors to take a "make-up" from some one they see in the flesh or from a photograph, and this may be done without the slightest intention of "impersonating" the individual whose appearance has suggested the make-up.

There was no doubt about the make-up of the three actors, Messrs. W. H. Fisher, W. J. Hill, and Edward Righton, in Gilbert and Gilbert à Beckett's *Happy Land*—the play that was produced at the Court Theatre on March 3, 1873, and prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain on March 7. They were photographs—cabinet size—of three of Her Majesty's Ministers, Messrs. William Gladstone, Robert Lowe, and A. S. Ayrton. The run of the play with "alterations and omissions," was, however, speedily resumed, and when it was taken into the provinces by Charles Wyndham I had the youthful impertinence to write John Bright and another Minister into it.

The Marquis de Leuville was a pretender himself, and his "works" were said to have been written for him by paid "ghosts," and I have no doubt he quite believed that the man Hill was one of mine.

The Marquis died some years after the affair, and the wealthy widow who had supplied him with the means of posing as a patrician and poet did not long survive him.

What became of Mr. Hill, who wrote all my plays for me, I never heard. It is only fair to say that I never inquired.

CHAPTER XXVII

THERE were plenty of genuine aristocrats in the old Bohemia, and they did not always confine their Bohemianism to the stage door or the ring side.

There was a Duke, a very charming and amiable Duke, who in the old days was quite as much at home in journalistic Bohemia as he was in theatrical Bohemia.

They were merry little supper-parties at Rule's, in Maiden Lane, in those days, and when the gay knights-errant of the Press and the lightly tripping idols of the Johnnies from theatreland sat around the sumptuous supper-board the Duke would shed the light of his paternal smile upon the scene.

The last time I saw the Duke taking his ease in Bohemia he was playing "Shove Ha'penny" with David James. I backed David—and lost.

A sporting Marquess, whose pet name among his Bohemian friends was "Ducks," was a popular figure at certain Bohemian clubs and resorts, and while he had many friends, fair and otherwise, in variety circles, he was on excellent terms with some of the gayer spirits of Fleet Street.

I have a joyous memory of him in connexion with a bright particular star of the variety firmament who, in her way, was as great a character as "Ducks."

One evening the Marquess had driven the diva as far as her residence in the neighbourhood of Bedford Square in a hansom. The Marquess tendered the driver his fare, and the driver demanded more.

The cabman got down to carry on the dispute at closer quarters, and when he insulted the Marquess, the diva, without a moment's hesitation, set about him in the good old-fashioned style.

The cabman, his breath taken away, literally and figura-

tively, by the sudden onslaught, scrambled on to the box and drove off at full speed.

A personal reminiscence of the Marquess carries me back to a famous Ascot week. I was staying in Windsor, and had some rooms in the same hotel as "Ducks."

One evening I was standing in the hall about dinner-time when I heard a shout. I looked up and I saw the Marquess leaning over the balustrade. In his hands he held a large dish. On the dish was a leg of mutton.

In another moment the dish descended with a crash into the hall, almost at the feet of a waiter who had a few minutes before taken it up.

The voice of the Marquess exclaimed, "If you call this mutton cooked, I don't!"

While the waiter was gathering up the pieces of the dish and mopping up the gravy from the floor, he looked up at me and said with a beautiful old English smile, "He doesn't mean any harm, sir."

The Marquess was one of the last survivals of a type of noble sportsmen that was commoner in the 'fifties and 'sixties, when the spirits of an Englishman, animal and otherwise, were more in evidence than they are now.

The fascination of a noble name in connexion with literature once cost me considerably more than an umbrella. But this was a perfectly legitimate transaction, and it led to my first acquaintance with the distinguished lawyer who is now the Prime Minister of England.

A good many years ago Mr. Archibald Grove, who was the prospective Liberal candidate for North-West Ham, came to me with a brilliant idea.

He was going to start a penny periodical on the lines of *Tit-Bits*. He had a splendid title, he told me, and it was *Short Cuts*.

He had secured Lord Randolph Churchill and other well-known political aristocrats as contributors. He was prepared to put up a certain amount of money. Would I go in to the extent of a few hundreds and write for the new paper?

There was no doubt of the genuineness of the enterprise, and with the political, social, and literary backing that it

would have there seemed to be a very fair chance for the new paper, and I had no hesitation in drawing a cheque.

The paper came out, and Lord Randolph Churchill wrote an article, and so did several other aristocratic and political celebrities, but *Short Cuts* was not one of the short cuts to success.

But while it was still alive the prospective member for North-West Ham invited me to dine at his house with a few friends. I found when I arrived that they were political friends, and among them were several lights of the Liberal Party.

Three of them—I did not know it at the time—were barristers, and one of the barristers was Mr. H. H. Asquith, Q.C.

By the time of coffee and cigars the conversation had become political, and the prospects of the Liberal Party—they were not in office then—were discussed.

Greatly daring, but in perfect innocence, I joined in the conversation.

“One thing I do hope,” I said, “and that is that when the Liberals come into power again they won’t have too many confounded lawyers in the Cabinet.”

For a moment there was silence, then Mr. Asquith smiled and said quietly, “That’s pleasant for me!”

You see I had quite forgotten that Mr. Asquith was a lawyer. I only knew him as the gentleman who then lived next door to Robert Buchanan in Maresfield Gardens, Fitzjohn’s Avenue, and whose little boy was always knocking a ball over into the bard’s garden.

Whenever Buchanan went into the garden to dream poetry, over would come a ball, and young Master Asquith would climb on to the wall and say, “Please will you give me my ball?”

Then the amiable poet would forget his dreams and go foraging about to find and return the ball.

One day Buchanan was writing at the big desk which stood against a window looking on to the garden. Suddenly there was a smash of broken glass, and through the window came a ball that struck the inkstand and sent the contents flowing over the poet’s manuscript.

Before the poet had recovered from the shock the voice of the young gentleman next door floated backwards on the breeze, "Please, sir, will you give me my ball?"

* * * * *

The Gold Craze had disappeared from the bills of the Princess's long before the Marquis de Leuville had disappeared from the bills of Marlborough Street.

The Baron de Fleurville was giving evidence before the magistrate as late as March 1890, but in December 1899 the Princess's had produced *Master and Man*, a drama by Henry Pettitt and myself.

The play was originally written for Mr. Robert Pateman. The part of Humpy Logan, a hunchback of revengeful and malignant turn of mind, was admirably suited to the powerful and intense method of one of the soundest and grippiest actors of the good old school.

The tragedy of his horror when the workmen he had betrayed were about to thrust him into a fiery furnace at the works had thrilled the provinces for many months when the brief run of *The Gold Craze* left the Princess's at liberty, and we brought *Master and Man* there and had a highly successful season with it.

And what a cast for melodrama it was. In addition to Robert Pateman we had Henry Neville to play the hero, Bella Pateman the heroine, J. H. Barnes as a burly forgerman, and Bassett Roe, and Fanny Brough, E. W. Gardiner, Sydney Howard, and Mrs. Huntley.

I remember Clement Scott in the *Daily Telegraph* said of Robert Pateman's Humpy Logan that no such sudden and impulsive force had been seen on the stage since the days of George Belmore. It was a Danny Mann accentuated.

Richard Mansfield, of America, formerly of London and originally of Heligoland—he was born there—saw the opportunities of this part, and secured the play for production in New York, but that is a story I shall come to presently.

Robert Pateman, always one of the strongest character actors on the English stage, can carry his memory back to the old days of the circuits and the stock companies, and even—so he was telling me quite recently—to the days when an attendant would step on the stage in the middle of a perform-

ance when candles were the only lighting arrangements, and snuff the wicks. That, of course, was in the small provincial theatres.

They were the days when the bill was frequently changed nightly, and an actor would have a part in a stock play given to him when he left the theatre at midnight, would have to study it during the day and play it in the evening.

Robert Pateman, after touring the provinces for some years, went to America, and in 1869 made his first appearance there. He played with Edwin Booth and Dion Boucicault in the stock company at Booth's Theatre for four years.

In '74 he scored a huge success in San Francisco as Harvey Duff in *The Shaughraun*, and now, in 1916, he is still playing the strong and vigorous parts for which he has been famous for fifty years.

Richard Mansfield produced *Master and Man* in New York at Palmer's Theatre, and thereby hangs a tale—a Winter's tale.

The famous critic, William Winter, completed, I believe, last spring his eightieth year, and he has been presented with an address signed by all the principal dramatists of America and England. He is a fine and scholarly critic, who deserves all the honour that can be showered upon him in his green old age. But he was the severest Winter imaginable as far as *Master and Man* was concerned, in 1890.

Richard Mansfield made an enormous success in the character of Humpy Logan, but America was at that time up in arms against English importations. The patriots who believed in America for the Americans didn't like to see English authors making a Tom Tiddler's ground of the Land of Liberty from Mexico to Maine, and the feelings of the critics, many of whom were dramatists themselves, were undoubtedly embittered by the paragraphs which used to be put about by every American manager who leased the acting rights of an English play.

It was not pleasant for American dramatists to read that two thousand pounds had been paid as advance royalties on one English play and three thousand pounds on account of fees for another. There were already signs of a storm when I got two thousand pounds advance payment on account of

the American rights of *The Romany Rye*, and Messrs. Brooks and Rickson revealed the facts to interviewers.

Even Gilbert and Sullivan did not escape the denunciation of American protectionists when *The Gondoliers* crossed the Atlantic in this same year, 1890.

Paragraphs as to the thousands of dollars that had been paid on account of the American rights were put about, and so when *The Gondoliers* did not catch on right away in New York several critics described the play as *The Gone Dollars*. And as *The Gone Dollars* *The Gondoliers* was popularly known.

But to return to the amiable and accomplished critic, Mr. William Winter. Here is an elegant extract from his review of *Master and Man*:

It is claptrap, devised to impress a goggle-eyed crowd of English bumpkins. It has been produced here in the plain, unvarnished, shopkeeping spirit of the corner grocery—that deplorable spirit which continually blasts the wholesome growth of the theatre in this country, which sordidly and speciously insists that the great object of the drama is always the financial prosperity of managers and never the advancement of the dramatic art and the consequent improvement of society. As if there were not pork enough or pickles enough for shopkeepers to speculate in! All over the United States at this moment, outside of the few capitals, the theatrical business is nearly prostrate—blighted by the incessant bloodsucking of parasitical speculation in the drama.

I do not say that the Winter of New York's discontent at what it was customary to call the English invasion of English authors was not justified, but American dramatists and American managers have certainly had their revenge, and an ample revenge, so far as the "shopkeeping speculation" is concerned.

And they have had it on this side of the great ocean with which Mr. Oscar Wilde was so greatly disappointed.

CHAPTER XXVIII

I CAME to the Princess's again in 1896 with *The Star of India*, written in collaboration with my friend Arthur Shirley, an expert and busy playwright, several of whose dramas have been money makers for over a quarter of a century.

Before the production of *The Star of India* certain paragraphs appeared in the newspapers concerning it, and one enterprising young gentleman who did the theatrical notices for a popular daily announced that the play was founded upon the tragedy of the mutiny of Manipur, a tragedy in which Mr. Frank St. Clair Grimwood, the British political agent, had met his death, and in which Mrs. Grimwood, his devoted wife, who had succeeded in escaping when the natives besieged the Residency, had played an heroic part.

Shortly after this statement had appeared the Licensor of Plays informed me that a letter had been addressed to him at the Lord Chamberlain's office imploring him to refuse to allow *The Star of India* to be produced.

The letter was written by Mrs. Grimwood Grimwood, the mother of the gallant young Englishman who had died at his post of duty in circumstances which had become a matter of history.

"SIR,—I have just heard that a new play by Mr. George R. Sims and Mr. Arthur Shirley is to be brought out next Saturday at the Princess's Theatre, and that it is founded on my daughter-in-law's 'Adventures in Manipur and the shocking murder of my son, and contains an attack on the Residency. I hear the play has not yet been licensed.

"Could you possibly withhold the license, as it is an outrage to all decency that money should be made on the stage out of what has been such an awful tragedy in my family only five years ago ?

"Yours faithfully,

"J. GRIMWOOD GRIMWOOD."

Had the intention of the authors been such as the mother of the gallant young Englishman had been led to believe by the enterprising young theatrical paragraphist of the popular daily she would have been perfectly justified in her indignant protest.

Fortunately the play was already in the hands of the licenser at the time Mrs. Grimwood's letter was received, and he was able in his reply to assure her that although the play dealt with the attack on the Residency and certain incidents mentioned by Mrs. St. Clair Grimwood, the young widow, in her book, "My Three Years in Manipur," there was no reference of any kind to the Grimwoods, and the story was treated in such a way as to prevent the audience fitting the date or the real persons who figured in the tragedy.

I hastened on receipt of the letter to assure Mrs. Grimwood and her friends that both Mr. Shirley and myself had taken the greatest care that nothing in the play should jar upon the feelings of the Grimwood family, and we offered to submit a copy of the play to any one the family might appoint to act in their interest.

However, shortly afterwards the matter was brought to an amiable and very satisfactory conclusion. The trouble—such as it was—had arisen entirely from the desire of an enterprising young journalist to be first in giving away the plot of a forthcoming play. In the course of his enterprise he had given away more plot than the play contained.

The Star of India was produced at the Princess's on Saturday April 26, 1896.

The cast included Miss Sydney Fairbrother, Miss Hettie Chattell, Miss Kate Tyndall, Miss Agnes Hewitt, Mr. Frank Wyatt, Mr. Clifton Alderson, Mr. Robert Pateman, and Mr. Sydney Howard.

The producer at the Princess's at that time was Mr. John Douglas, and John Douglas was a prolific inventor of stage effects. He gave the stage the famous "tank" scene in *The Dark Secret*, and the tank has been introduced into hundreds of dramas since.

George Rignold, when he made his last revival of *The Lights o' London* in Australia, used the tank in the Regent's Canal scene, and Harold Armitage plunged into real water



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to rescue Seth Preene from a damp end to his villainous career.

I was at the Princess's again in the autumn of 1897 with Arthur Shirley as my collaborator.

M. Pierre Decourcelle had produced a highly successful melodrama, *Les Deux Gosses*, at the Paris Ambigu, and he wrote me saying he thought it would suit London.

Pierre Decourcelle and I were first acquainted in my early Paris days, and we had had many pleasant times together. Decourcelle when a boy was sent to school at Brighton, and he is one of the few French authors who speak and write very good English.

The late Léon Gandillot, who wrote *Ferdinand Le Noceur*, was another French dramatist who spoke English, but not nearly so fluently as Decourcelle. One day Gandillot came to see me at Regent's Park and my two little toy poms ran into the study while we were talking and began to bark at him.

"Ah!" exclaimed Gandillot, "the splendid hounds!"

Another French dramatist—he was an actor, too—who spoke a little English sometimes was Louis Decori, brother of the famous *avocat*, Maître Decori.

Shirley and I adapted a drama of Decori's for Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sugden, *La Fille du Garde de Chasse*. I saw it in Paris, and Decori was very anxious that I should put it on the English market. While I was in Paris arranging with Decori I told him I wanted to see a murder trial, and I should like to go behind the scenes at the Morgue and see the cold-storage system and the bodies that had been preserved for years by the process.

Decori got me a letter of introduction from his brother to the Greffier of the Morgue, and said the murder trial would be simple, as he himself was known at the Palais de Justice and we should only have to walk in and sit down.

There was a murder trial in two days' time, so I arranged to put in a morning at that and spend the afternoon at the Morgue.

The murder trial was interesting. Everybody smoked cigarettes in court till the judge entered, then we threw our cigarettes down and stamped on them.

It sounded as if we were applauding the judge.

A young girl was charged with murdering her baby and leaving it in her trunk at her last place, where the body was quite accidentally found.

The judge commenced the proceedings by informing the girl exactly how she committed the crime, and told her it was idiotic of her to plead not guilty. He also narrated the details of her past life in case they might have slipped her memory, and he laid the black paint on so thickly that at last the girl, who had been sitting between the two soldiers who in France are on either side of the accused, jumped up and exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. the Judge, you *are* rubbing it in! I'm not so bad as all that!" or words to that effect.

I heard as much of the trial as I wanted to, and then Louis Decori and I went to the Morgue.

Outside he left me. Nothing would induce him to come in and see the tragedies that were kept in cold storage in a large room known as the Columbarium.

Decori had written a drama of Apache life in which any number of victims were put into a condition for "the ice-box," but he assured me that if he saw a body in the Morgue it would make him seriously ill. So I had four hours behind the scenes at the Morgue without the companionship of my French confrère.

Among other experiences I had the iced remains of "L'homme coupé en morceaux" handed to me.

"The man cut in four" was a Paris sensation and a Paris mystery. It was for a long time supposed that it was a gruesome Government joke intended to distract the attention of Parisians at a time of grave political crisis.

But to return to *Les Deux Gosses*. When we had seen the play at the Ambigu we agreed to adapt it to the English stage. Arthur Shirley told me that Messrs. Hardie, Von Leer, and Gordyn, who had made a success in the provinces with *On the Frontier*, were anxious to get a drama to produce in London. I thought *Les Deux Gosses* might be the very thing, and Shirley and I turned it into *The Two Little Vagabonds*. Making it "quite English you know" was comparatively easy, as the French play was undoubtedly suggested by Dickens's "Oliver Twist."

Two Little Vagabonds was produced at the Princess's by Messrs. Hardie, Von Leer, and Gordyn, on September 23, 1896, by arrangement with Mr. Albert Gilmer, who was then the manager of my old home in Oxford Street.

The cast included Miss Geraldine Oliffe, Mena Le Bert, Miss Eva Williams, Marie Foley, Walter Howard, Ernest Leicester, Liston Lyle, Edward Coleman, Chris Walker, and Edmund Gurney.

Lewis Carroll, the author of "Alice in Wonderland," wrote me a characteristic and enthusiastic letter about the play. But he did more than that. He wrote to "the two boys."

Dick was delightfully played by Miss Kate Tyndall, but Dick was in real life the wife of Mr. Albert Gilmer.

Miss Sydney Fairbrother, whose pathetic portrayal of Wally touched all hearts, had the misfortune early in the run to lose her husband, and when, owing to a change in the cast, we had to call a rehearsal, it was in widow's weeds that she rehearsed the part of the consumptive boy.

It was shortly after that rehearsal that Miss Fairbrother and Miss Tyndall each received from the author of "Alice in Wonderland" a children's book with a very pretty inscription in it, and at the same time a delightful letter.

The author of "Alice in Wonderland" addressed each of the two ladies, the widow and the wife, as "My dear child," under the impression that they were two clever children playing the parts.

If I remember rightly, both the ladies acknowledged the gift and the letter, but were careful not to undeceive the kindly author and destroy his delightful illusion.

CHAPTER XXIX

EARLY in the 'eighties I wrote a series of special articles—"Horrible London"—for the *Daily News*, and from that time onward to the day of his lamented death Sir John Robinson, the editor, was my very good friend.

John Richard Robinson was of the old school when Fleet Street was more a republic of letters than it is now, and the motto upon the banner of its Bohemian Brotherhood was "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."

Robinson had been one of Douglas Jerrold's young men before he edited the *Evening Express* and then came on to the *Daily News*.

In the middle 'eighties I had undertaken another series for the *Daily News*, and I was to send in an article now and then at my convenience.

Before the series for which I had contracted was quite finished I went for a winter holiday to Algiers.

I had left—as I thought—a sufficient number of articles behind me to keep the series going in the *Daily News* until I returned to England.

I had agreed to conclude the series with an article on a subject then being very much discussed, viz. the abolition of the fees charged to parents by the School Board—and that article I had not written.

One evening after our return from a distant excursion that had taken four days, Count Armfelt, my travelling companion, went to an Arab café in Algiers. In the Arab café—goodness knows how it got there!—he saw a torn sheet of the *Daily News*, and, glancing at it, he saw my name, and found that on the sheet was the last of the articles I had left behind me.

He brought the torn sheet back to the hotel at which we were staying and said: "Look, they have used all your

articles. What about the last one you promised them, on the Free Education question?"

I had not had time to grasp the situation before a waiter came into the room and brought me a telegram.

It was from Mr. Henry Lucy—he wasn't Sir Henry then—who was acting as editor of the *Daily News* in the temporary absence of Sir John Robinson, who was on a holiday:

"Must have article at once, as Parliament is meeting early next week."

The telegram had been sent to my London address and repeated from there.

It was nearly midnight when I got that wire. I had to finish my three columns for the *Referee* before I went to bed, because they would have to be in the post early the following morning in order to be delivered in time for the next issue.

By the time I had finished the three columns of "Mustard and Cress" for the *Referee* it was 3 A.M., and I felt too sleepy and tired to do myself anything like justice in an important *Daily News* article.

But rather than break faith with an editor I determined to sacrifice the rest of my African holiday. We boarded the mail-boat the next morning, and on board the boat, which encountered the Mediterranean at its very worst, I wrote "Fee or Free" for the *Daily News*. Ten minutes after we had landed at Marseilles I had registered it to the editor.

One word about Sir Henry Lucy.

Tom Hood died in 1874. Soon after his death an article upon Tom Hood written by Mr. Lucy appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

Henry Sampson, Hood's successor on *Fun*, didn't like something in the article, and in the pages of *Fun* made an angry reply to Lucy. And I, with the ardour of a young journalist just beginning to "taste blood," followed up the article with a little thing of my own.

But not long afterwards I was introduced to Lucy by Edmund Yates. "Toby, M.P.," was then writing the brilliant Parliamentary articles in the *World* "Under the Clock." I had not been in the society of "Toby, M.P.," five minutes before my feelings underwent a complete change, and—though we rarely meet now—the first man I ever attacked in print

has been my good friend for over forty years, and is my good friend still.

Count Armfelt, who for many years was my companion in my travels about Europe, came to me in a curious way.

One winter night in the year 1884 I came home from a first-night production to find among the letters which had arrived by the last post one which aroused my interest :

"DEAR SIR,—I have read a good deal of your work, and I think it is quite possible you might be able to find me some more pleasant employment than that in which I am at present engaged. I am a Finn by birth, I have been a tutor and an officer in the Egyptian army. I speak and write fluently French, German, Italian, and Arabic—Russian, Finnish, and Swedish and Spanish fairly well. I have travelled all over Europe, a good deal of Asia and Africa. I was with General Gordon in the first Khartoum expedition, and I am personally known to Emin Bey, Slatin Pasha, and Mr. Henry Stanley.

"At present I am slaughtering bullocks at Deptford. Can you help me to something more suited to my tastes and such talents as I may possess ?

"Yours obediently,

"ALBERT EDWARD ARMFELT."

I wrote to the address given in the letter that night. The next day Count Armfelt came to see me. He slaughtered no more bullocks. He remained with me until within a short time of his death a few years ago. And he was the "Albert Edward" who was for so long a familiar figure in my *Referee* columns and in the travel notes of "Dagonet Abroad."

To Sir John Robinson, who made me a *Daily News* man at the time that such brilliant writers as Henry Lucy, Archibald Forbes, Justin McCarthy, Moy Thomas, William Black, and Andrew Lang were on the staff, I owe my first meeting with Bret Harte, a meeting which was to ripen into an acquaintance and later on into a friendship which is one of the cherished memories of my life.

How I met Bret Harte is a story that I cannot omit from my reminiscences of the days of long ago.

Across the Atlantic the ballads for recitation I had written

and published had apparently made a better literary impression than they had here. At any rate, the popular American poets of the period sought me out just to shake hands when they came this side.

I knew Joaquin Miller, the wild-locked, red-shirted, high-booted, pistol-belted "Poet of the Sierras," but that is long before "The Dagonet Ballads," and is another story.

Colonel John Hay, whose "Pike County Ballads" had first started me on the road to dramatic verse, introduced himself.

One afternoon I was at Paddington Station. I had taken my seat on the train for Malvern when a gentleman came up to the carriage window smiling. "George R. Sims, I believe?" he said.

I raised my hat in admission of the soft impeachment.

"Glad to meet you. I am Colonel John Hay."

The colonel put out his hand and we shook. He had just begun to say something very nice to me about my ballads when the train started, and I never saw the creator of "Jim Bludso" again.

Will Carleton, of "Over the Hills to the Poor-House," "Gone with a Handsomer Man," and a hundred homely ballads that are as popular here as they are in the land that gave them birth, came to see me twice during his brief trip to London, and said things that made me blush.

Fortunately he didn't put them in a letter, or I might have been tempted to print it.

But one American poet said things that I feel I must repeat, because the poet who said them was Bret Harte.

Some years ago, in consequence of the enormous success of "Living London," a fortnightly-part publication which I had edited for them, the House of Cassell started a new penny weekly which was called *Men and Women*, and it was started under my editorship. It was an interesting little paper, and I had some of the best writers of the day on the staff, but it shared the fate to which all "men and women" are doomed. After a brief span of existence it died.

But while it was alive I contributed to its columns a series entitled "Amongst My Autographs," and in one article I told the story of a dinner-party given by Sir John Robinson at the Reform Club—a dinner-party at which I met some old

friends—William Black, Andrew Lang—Stevenson's "dear Andrew with the brindled hair"—Henry W. Lucy, and a new friend, Bret Harte.

The dinner, I learnt afterwards, was given in order that I might meet the author of "The Luck of Roaring Camp."

In the article in *Men and Women* I referred to my first meeting and told the story of the friendship that followed it.

A week after the article had appeared the following letter, addressed to the editor, reached me :

" Reform Club, *July 25, 1903.*

" SIR,—I must complain of an omission from Mr. Sims's last chapter of his ' Autographs.' It was, I am compelled to say, within his knowledge that Bret Harte in expressing to me his desire to meet ' Dagonet,' went on to say : ' I tell you, Robinson, that when I first came here I wanted to know " Dagonet " more than Tennyson or Browning or Gladstone, or anybody.' Now this part of my narrative is suppressed in the ' Autographs ' article. To the remark that when they did meet Bret Harte was not disappointed, I will only add that the insertion of this letter will be regarded by me as superseding the apology which is certainly my due.

" Faithfully yours,

" J. R. ROBINSON."

The nature of the letter, I think, amply justified my reticence while telling in a journal of which I was the editor the story of my first acquaintance with Bret Harte.

Bret Harte was of Dutch ancestry. His father, a schoolmaster, died when he was a boy, and the family were left without means, and the boy was put into a store. When he was seventeen he left for California, and took his mother with him.

He tramped to the mines of Sonora, and there became a schoolmaster. But journalism soon found him, and he became editor of the *Eureka Gazette*. Then he went to San Francisco, worked at case, and became editor of the *Golden Era*. It was when he was editing the *Overland Monthly* that he wrote in it " The Luck of Roaring Camp," and soon afterwards two hemispheres rang with his fame.

When I met Bret Harte for the first time I told him that he was absolutely the reverse of what I had always pictured him.

You would never have imagined that he had seen the rough side of life on the goldfields. There was nothing about him to suggest the Roaring Camp, and the Rev. J. M. Bellew, who was the first to introduce his poetry to the public through John Camden Hotten, said of him : " He looks as if he dated his letters from St. James's Square rather than San Francisco."

I saw a good deal of Bret Harte when he came to London, and when he learnt that I generally spent my Sundays at my mother's house in Hamilton Terrace he would sometimes call for me in the afternoon—he lived in Hamilton Terrace at that time himself—and we used to stroll together to Hampstead.

He died in 1902, and I saw him some little time previous to his death.

He came into Verrey's in Regent Street with a friend, and I was there. It was a meeting that made me very sad, for I knew that in all probability it was a parting. Bret Harte was suffering from a painful and incurable malady. It had attacked his throat, and it was with difficulty that he spoke.

I knew that afternoon that the end could not be far off. Bret Harte knew it too, and there was something in the last grasp of the hand that he gave me that said " Farewell ! "

CHAPTER XXX

IN a year when there is no Derby at Epsom my memory travels back over half a century to the Derbys of my youthful—my very youthful—days, when the great Epsom “carnival” was an event looked forward to eagerly and wagered upon heavily by the racing division and moderately by men old and young, for whom a day of racing was a day’s outing, and the Derby Day a glorified beanfeast with all the fun of the fair thrown in.

For days before the Derby the windows of the West End hosiers and outfitters were filled with ties and scarves in the racing colours of popular owners.

I have somewhere stowed away relics of my early racing days in ties that were in the colours of Count de Lagrange, Sir Joseph Hawley, and Mr. Merry, the yellow and black that often carried my silver hopes, the Marquess of Hastings—I had a cigar-case in his colours—and Mr. Cartwright. The only British admiral I troubled about in those days was Admiral Rous, and the only general who appealed to my youthful imagination was General Peel.

I was quite a little boy when I went to my first race meeting, and I saw Polly Peachum win at Worcester in July 1857. I never forgot my first win, the horse my father drew in a sweep on the course.

It was my first win because my father gave me sixpence out of the sweep money, which I spent in gingerbread at one of the booths for which Pitchcroft was famous.

The parrot that whistles taxis all day long from my front window in Regent’s Park in this present year, 1916, is named Polly Peachum, not after the heroine of *The Beggar’s Opera*, but after my first win on a racecourse in 1857.

The first Derby horse in which I was interested was Carac-tacus, which won in 1862 at 40 to 1. That was the race in

which the starter, Mr. McGeorge, was severely reprimanded for starting the horses in advance of the starting-post.

But I didn't know anything about that. I was still a schoolboy.

Why we boys were interested in Caractacus was on account of the wild stories which were in circulation as to its ownership. One of the weird stories put about was that it had been purchased by a hairdresser out of a hansom cab and trained on Clapham Common.

A story similar in some points was told many years afterwards about a horse belonging to my old friend Mr. Quartermaine East. One of the street stories was that it had been trained by his gardener in his spare time.

Quartermaine East was, when I knew him, the proprietor of the Queen's Hotel in Aldersgate Street. In the course of his career he was Sheriff of London, and he afterwards had a large hotel in Portsmouth where I used to have many happy chats with him over old days and old times, and listen to his wonderful stories of himself and "my friend Lord Rosebery."

Quartermaine East was one of the supporters of the Tichborne Claimant, and he and Mr. Guilford Onslow believed in "Sir Roger" almost—if not quite—to the last.

Quartermaine East was very proud of his friendship with Lord Rosebery, and had many interesting stories to tell of his noble friend. One of them, because of its political value, is worth repeating.

Lord Rosebery, it will be remembered, was Prime Minister in 1894, and in that year he won the Derby with Ladas. Soon after the victory there was a dinner at the Durdans, and Quartermaine East was one of the guests.

After dinner there was a discussion as to the effect the Prime Minister winning the Derby would have upon the Nonconformist Conscience.

Sir Charles Russell and other important persons present made various suggestions, and then Quartermaine East weighed in with his, which was that Lord Rosebery should erect a statue to Oliver Cromwell at Westminster.

This was done to the great annoyance of the Irish Party, who were furious, and Quartermaine East held that the

carrying out of his suggestion largely contributed to the downfall of the Rosebery administration.

But to return to the Derby. The first horse I was really interested in from a racing point of view was Gladiateur, who won in 1865. That was the French year, and all sorts of stories were current about the "practices" of the Count.

At one time it was seriously contended that Gladiateur was a four-year-old when he ran for the Blue Riband of the English Turf.

Before Gladiateur ran in the Leger a popular owner demanded an examination of the horse's mouth, but his request was not acceded to by the stewards.

When Count de Lagrange died some years afterwards all the old scandals were revived. The Count undoubtedly ran horses as a business, and the running of his horses more than once led to displays of public disapproval, notably in 1864, Blair Athol's year, when Fille de l'Air, who had been beaten hopelessly in the Guineas, won the Oaks.

It was Hermit, in 1867, that started so many of my young friends on racing careers which ended for most of them more or less disastrously. Hermit won between two snowstorms, and just before starting you could have got 100 to 1 easily.

The little group of young sportsmen to which I belonged in those days used to meet of an evening in the billiard-room at the "Lord Elgin," in Elgin Avenue, or in that of the "Warrington," off Maida Vale. Some of them who were a little older than I was had backed Hermit at fifties and sixties some time before the race.

Among the incidents of the Hermit win I remember that the Duke of Hamilton had laid £180,000 to £6000 against the horse. He had the good fortune to have the bet called off before the day.

Over Hermit's race the astute Captain Machell, then starting on his racing career, won £80,000. Mr. Chaplin, the owner, is reported to have won £141,000 in bets, and the young Marquess of Hastings, of tragic memory, lost £103,000.

The Marquess, whose career on the Turf was as short as it was sensational, died of consumption at the age of twenty-six, but in his little span of sporting life he managed to make

himself one of the most talked about young Corinthians of his day.

He started on the Turf directly he left Oxford, and at once became a mark for "the clever division." To begin with, they sold him a horse for £13,500. It was a horse of rank for a man of rank, but the rank that the horse descended to was the cab rank.

But presently the Marquess had fifty horses in training. He won several big races. Over Lecturer, in the Cesarewitch, he won £80,000, but his gains were never equal to his losses, and his wild, though frequently generous, extravagances.

The young Marquess, who was the sensation of his day, is still remembered as one of the tragic figures of gay life in the 'sixties.

I saw Wells, "the jockey with the whiskers," ride Blue Gown to victory for Sir Joseph Hawley in 1868, and defeat the favourite, the Marquess of Hastings's Lady Elizabeth, against whom 7 to 4 had been laid.

Lady Elizabeth ran in the Oaks of that year, when George Fordham, "The Demon," rode Formosa to victory and won by ten lengths. Lady Elizabeth was not in the first three.

Only the other day I read in a London newspaper that Wells, the jockey who won the Derby on Blue Gown, had been admitted to a workhouse somewhere in Wales. The story was, of course, absurd. Wells died on July 17, 1873.

Old race-goers will remember that Sir Joseph Hawley ran three horses in this race, and declared to win with Rosicrucian or Green Sleeve, but the public, a good judge this time, would not be stalled off Blue Gown, which started at seven to two and won by half a length.

I went to that Derby by road, and I remember at the "Cock" at Sutton a poet prophet was giving off his Derby tip to the crowd. This was the tip:

*Yet thousands there be who profess to believe
In an easy-won victory by Sir Joseph's Green Sleeve;
But all ye gay gallants from London's big town
Must shell out your gold on bonnie Blue Gown.*

Blue Gown was sold by Sir Joseph, and died and was buried at sea while on the way to America.

I was present at the Derby of 1869 when Pretender was returned as the winner by the judge. My money was on Sir Joseph Hawley's Pero Gomez, and when the horse passed the post I thought the cash was as good as in my pocket, for the people all round me shouted the name of Pero Gomez as the winner.

Pretender's win was a hotly debated question for a long time afterwards. Pero Gomez won the Leger, and Pretender was not in the first three, and then the discussion as to the Derby decision raged for a time more furiously than ever.

I saw Kingcraft win in 1870, when Macgregor started a red-hot favourite and the price was 9 to 4 on.

There was always an enormous amount of money in those days for the "yellow and black," and before the race one of the bookmakers said to the Scotch ironmaster, "If your horse wins we're broke."

Macgregor did not win. It did not finish in the first three, and the ring paid out cheerfully over the 20 to 1 Kingcraft, which Tom French had ridden to victory for Lord Falmouth, but there were many weird rumours as to the cause of Macgregor's defeat, and the stories that were told included incidents that are favourite devices of the melodramatist when he writes a racing drama.

No suspicion ever rested upon Mr. Merry, whose luck it was to own some of the most successful horses on the Turf.

But to this day the old racing division, when the name of Kingcraft is mentioned, will tell you again the strange stories of the dark deeds to which the utter failure of Macgregor in the Derby of '70 was believed to be due.

1871 was the Baron's year. Baron Rothschild won the Derby that year with Favonius and the Oaks with Hannah. The Baron finished up his "year" by winning the Leger and the Cesarewitch.

It was in 1880 that we had another Derby sensation, when Fred Archer rode the Duke of Westminster's Bend Or to victory, beating Mr. Charles Brewer's Robert the Devil.

It went round the ring with lightning rapidity that Bend Or would be objected to on the ground that he was not Bend Or, in other words, the horse that won the race was not the horse it was represented to be.

Mr. Brewer did at the Newmarket July meeting lodge a formal objection, his contention being that Bend Or, the winner of the Derby, was Tadcaster, and that the two colts had been mistaken when they were sent as yearlings to the training stable.

A groom in the Bend Or stables had said so.

The Stewards then made a thorough investigation, and decided that Bend Or was himself and not, as Lord Dundreary used to say, "the other fellow."

I don't think I have missed many Derbys since Bend Or, but I have never followed the fortunes of the favourites with the eagerness and enthusiasm that were mine in the olden golden days when the Derby was the racing event of the year and the great prizes of the modern Turf had not come into existence to compete with the classic events. Clubs like Sandown and Kempton Park had not then been established to change the environment and the conditions of a day's racing.

I doubt if there are any jockeys now who are such popular idols as were the jockeys whose names were familiar in our mouths as household words in the 'sixties, the 'seventies, and the 'eighties.

It was in 1879 that George Fordham, who for years had been England's foremost horseman, won his first Derby on Sir Bevys, the horse starting at the nice price of 20 to 1. There was more cheering that day for the jockey than for the horse.

With the coming of the Americans and the "seat on the neck," the star of English jockeydom for a time seemed to be on the wane.

The New World was going to make the Old World sit up by showing it the superiority of the monkey crouch.

The jockeys of my early racing days were George Fordham, by many considered to be the greatest horseman of his day, Johnny Osborne, a churchwarden in his own parish, Tom French, the Grimshaws—one of them came to an untimely end by being thrown out of a trap and breaking his neck—Wells, Maidment, Challoner, Snowden, Tom Cannon, George Barrett and Fred Barrett, F. Webb, Custance and Goater, Kenyon, Fred Archer, and later on Sam and Tom Loates,

Jack Watts, Mornington and Kempton Cannon, and Charley Wood.

Fred Archer in his day was perhaps the greatest public favourite who has ever worn a racing jacket. The legend of his deeds is a glorious memory of the Turf.

I wonder if the ghost of Fred Archer still revisits the pale glimpses of the moon to ride in phantom trials on Newmarket Heath ?

CHAPTER XXXI

GOING to the Derby in those days was a prominent feature in the programme of the joy of life, and the joy began when you started and you kept up the joy till you got home.

For the young men who went down on their own or with a friend the hansom had curtains to keep the dust out, and you wore a dust-coat and a white hat with a long veil attached to it, and in the band of your hat you stuck wooden dolls.

The veil was necessary, for the dust of the road was blinding. You went armed with a pea-shooter and peas and bags of flour, with which you pelted other joy-makers as you passed them on the road. And usually on the roof of the hansom you carried a hamper of good things, which included champagne.

It was a day of animal spirits, of high jinks, of carnival folly, and frequently of free fights.

The road to the Derby was the joy of descriptive writers, and because the Lord of Misrule held sway from morn till dewy eve and considerably later the stay-at-homes made it part of their programme to line the thoroughfares leading into town and watch the return from the Derby.

To other meetings in the home district we travelled more soberly, and if we chose the road our progress was more businesslike than boisterous.

Some of the suburban race-courses of my youth have long ceased to exist. They were too near residential property, or perhaps it would be fairer to say that residential property gradually came too near to them.

There were steeplechases at Kingsbury and at Hendon, and as they were within walking distance of my home these steeplechases reckoned me among their faithful patrons.

The Croydon meeting was popular; so were Egham and West Drayton. All are abolished. But the great Cockney

fixture was a summer one, and when "Happy Hampton" disappeared from the list of fixtures the gaiety of 'Arry and 'Arriet was temporarily eclipsed.

In the northern suburbs we got compensation for the local loss in the opening of a new race-course at Alexandra Park in June 1868.

I was there on the second day, when the betting ring presented patches of broken red brick and builders' waste, and I made my first acquaintance with a member of the gang of clever rascals known as "The Boys."

The "Boy" in question was pointed out to me by a friend who had driven down with me, and who had already paid pretty heavily for his racing experience. Poor chap! The last time I saw my friend he was driving a hansom cab in Birmingham.

When the young gentleman at Alexandra Park had been pointed out to me as "one of the Boys," as it was the first time I had heard the expression I was anxious for an explanation.

"The Boys," as every one knows to-day, are racecourse sharpers and tricksters, always on the watch for innocents to whom they can tell the tale, and they are sometimes clever enough to bring off coups at the expense of the astute fraternity that lives by laying the odds.

There was a certain West End bar and lounge in which "The Boys" and a number of well-known race-course characters congregated regularly, and after the day's racing prepared to improve the artificially shining hour by finding an innocent who would like a little game of cards.

"The Boys" who worked this lay were all of superior appearance and superior manners, and were able to tell the tale with a fair prospect of success.

I was pretty well acquainted in those days, through my connexion with a certain theatre, with a well-known Duke and his young brother.

The Duke's brother fell in one evening at this bar with one of the international gang, a card-sharper of superior attainments who divided his time between London and New York, and generally made a considerable sum on the voyage.

The Duke's brother was taken to a sumptuously furnished

flat in the West End, where he met elegant company and came away the poorer by three thousand pounds.

He told the Duke what had happened to him, and the Duke blamed him severely for being such a fool.

"They wouldn't have done me like that," he said, and to prove that they would not the Duke went to the bar one evening just to show the clever division that although he was an hereditary legislator he was more than a match for the fraudulent fraternity.

He met there one of the most brilliant of "The Boys," who promptly made his acquaintance, pointed out to him the members of the flash division who were present, and took the Duke off to his own flat to meet some American sportsmen who were over here for a racing campaign.

When the Duke, at an early hour of the morning, left the party of genuine American sportsmen, he left behind his IOU's for eleven thousand pounds. And although at the finish he was convinced that the gang of professional sharpers had played the game on him he paid the money rather than have trouble.

That is a personal memoir because I knew the "Boy" who brought off that coup and followed his career on and off the Turf for twenty years.

The swell gang of which he was the captain became so daring in their enterprises, and so frequently made this bar and lounge the scene of their preliminary operations that the police had a conference with the eminently respectable proprietors of the establishment, and it was decided to close the bar and turn it into a restaurant. And the proprietors were very glad to do so and get rid of their highly undesirable clients.

Among the frequenters of that famous bar there were plenty of "characters." There were men young and old who had run through their own or other people's fortunes, and it was through the horses that most of them had gone to the dogs.

They haunted the bar, some for old association's sake, and others on the look-out for former acquaintances whom they could tap for a sovereign or two, or more if they could get it. And these men were always the jauntiest patrons of the

establishment, carrying off with a loud laugh and a swaggering gait the tragedy that was gnawing at their heart-strings.

The loafers of the lounge were pretty sure of a free drink if they waited long enough.

One of them whom I had known in his better days told me that though he managed to keep his wardrobe up sufficiently to make a decent appearance, he had often to go dinnerless for days in succession.

"I can get a drink easy enough," he said, "but if I were to ask any of the men I know here to stand me a meal they would never speak to me again. You can ask for a drink anywhere without losing caste, but if you ask for food you are a beggar."

This man, who at one time drove his own four-in-hand, eventually solved the difficulty of paying the rent for which he was six months in arrears by marrying the landlady.

After that I missed him from the bar. I met him once in Regent Street, and he told me his wife would not let him out of an evening alone. She employed him more usefully about the house.

Another well-known "character" was Major ——. He was always hanging about the bar on the look-out for old friends.

His Sovereign had dispensed with the Major's services in peculiar circumstances.

Some years previously, when he was quartered at Chatham with his regiment, he had been on the spree with a number of choice spirits.

In a certain public-house they fell in with a well-known local baker, who, in the language of bibulous Bohemia, was "blind to the world."

The baker was put out of the tavern for falling about on the floor, and immediately fell on the pavement.

The Major and his friends saw the chance of a practical joke. The Major obtained a wheelbarrow, put the baker into it, got some red paint, and painted a broad red streak across his throat, and then wheeled the baker back to his shop.

It was between twelve and one o'clock in the morning, and the house was closed, so they rang the bell and called up the wife.

The wife came down and opened the front door, gave one

horrified look at the man whose head was lying over the side of the barrow with an apparently gashed throat, uttered a piercing shriek, and fell down in a fit.

The history of that bygone bar would make a striking chapter in the story of sporting London during the latter portion of the nineteenth century. It was frequented by some of the best and some of the worst men about town.

Noble lords and ignoble loafers, owners and bookmakers, poets and prize-fighters, Army officers, barristers, jockeys and journalists, authors, actors, artists and musicians, police officials and men who had done time, were among the daily and nightly clients of the establishment.

It is gone now, but it has left an abiding memory with those of us who knew it in the gay days of old.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE element of tragedy has entered many a time and oft into the lives of the players who in the mimic scene portray the joys and sorrows, the pains and passions of life, as imagined by the dramatist.

In the great scene in *Youth*, the Drury Lane drama by Augustus Harris and Paul Meritt, there lay upon the battle-field four actors whose only stage business it was to render silent service to their country and to be slain as silently as—so far as the play was concerned—they had lived.

One night after the curtain had fallen on this scene I went behind to see Harris, who was acting in the play, and I got on to the stage just as the corpses were getting up. In four of the corpses I recognized actors who in their day had been leading men at the West End theatres. One of them had been the manager of a West End theatre.

In a pantomime at the National Theatre in Harris's time there was a procession of Shakespearean characters, and the actor who represented King Lear in that pantomime procession had once been the star who played King Lear at the Lane.

In an Adelphi play of which I was part author the heroine was played by an accomplished and charming actress, a graceful and fascinating woman.

She was a great success in the part. Everybody liked her. She played in more than one West End success after that, and proved herself as charming in comedy as she had been in melodrama.

Then she drifted out. The only news ever sent by her to old friends and associates was that she was ill.

One day the death of this once-famous actress was announced and the date of the funeral given in a daily paper.

The day after that announced for the funeral at the Roman Catholic Cemetery at East Finchley, a friend of mine, Mr. J. C.

Barnett, went with his wife to see where the stage favourite had been laid. They wandered about, and failed to find any newly made grave, and were about to come away when through a gap in the hedge they saw in what appeared to be a ditch a number of beautiful wreaths and crosses. Lifting some of the wreaths the visitors discovered some rough boards, and on lifting the boards saw at the bottom of a deep pit a coffin.

My friend went at once to see the superintendent of the cemetery, Mr. Buckerfield, and Mr. Buckerfield told him that the grave was a common one, costing 10s., and probably within a short time half a dozen coffins would be laid on that which contained the remains of the dead actress.

Swift action was taken. The name on one of the wreaths was that of a wealthy lady, the wife of a distinguished surgeon in Harley Street. The lady was communicated with; and she saw Mr. Buckerfield at once. The permission of the Home Secretary was obtained for the coffin to be removed, and now the dead actress rests in a grave near that of Michael Gunn, and above it friends have erected a suitable monument.

This is the story of the grave of the charming woman and brilliant actress who was at one time my heroine at the Adelphi—Olga Brandon.

Charles Warner, one of the finest melodramatic actors of his day and an admirable character comedian, will be best remembered perhaps by his marvellous performance of Coupeau in *Drink*. He once played Othello, and it was a very fine performance indeed. He was an admirable Tom Robinson in *It's Never Too Late to Mend*, and in romantic drama of the robust kind he was unrivalled.

It was while playing in *Michael Strogoff* at the Adelphi in 1881 that he was in a stage fight accidentally wounded in the hand by James Fernandez, and one of his fingers was permanently injured.

Charles Warner was the hero of two Adelphi melodramas in which I was concerned—*In the Ranks* and *The Last Chance*.

His end also was a tragedy. He committed suicide by hanging himself in his room in New York.

At the termination of *The Last Chance* Warner left the Adelphi, and the Gattis told me that for *The Harbour Lights*,

the drama I had written for them with Henry Pettitt, they had entered into a contract with William Terriss.

Terriss was the ideal actor for a play in which the hero was a young naval officer.

William Lewin—Terriss was a *nom de théâtre*—had been for a short time in the Royal Navy, but left it to take up the stage, making his first appearance at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Birmingham, in 1869, when he was just twenty years of age. But in 1871, when I met him first—it was at the Unity Club—he was performing at Drury Lane in Halliday's drama of *Rebecca*, and remaining on at the Lane, he played Malcolm Graeme in '72 in Halliday's *Lady of the Lake*.

In June 1885 Terriss wrote me from the Lyceum, where he was then playing :

“ DEAR SIMS,—It may possibly interest you to know that I have settled for a lengthy engagement with the Gattis, commencing with your new autumn drama. If at any time you want to see me about the part, I need hardly say I shall always be glad to attend your summons.

“ Yours sincerely,

“ WILL TERRISS.”

The Harbour Lights was produced at the Adelphi on December 23, 1885, and ran without interruption until June 24, 1887, the month of Queen Victoria's Jubilee.

And it was at the Adelphi some years later that the ideal hero of Adelphi melodrama was foully murdered as he was entering the theatre.

The circumstances that led up to the murder were, as I will show, as remarkable as the manner of its accomplishment was villainously melodramatic.

It was from the Lyceum, where he had been playing with Irving and Ellen Terry in *Olivia*, that William Terriss came to us at the Adelphi to achieve, perhaps, the greatest success of his career as Lieutenant David Kingsley, R.N. Before he achieved fame of any kind on the stage he had had a career which was as romantic as that of any hero he personated, and he had acted in real life with as many changes of scene as we used to give the audience in the palmy days of the Adelphi.

William Terriss, before he was five and twenty, had been seaman, tea-planter, engineer, actor, sheep-farmer, and horse-breeder, and had twice been shipwrecked. He was a midshipman in the Royal Navy and a tea-planter at Chittagong, and after being shipwrecked on his way home he became an apprentice at some engineering works at Greenwich.

He remained at the Adelphi after the run of *The Harbour Lights* and played the hero in *The Bells of Haslemere* and *The Union Jack*, but soon after that he went to America.

He was in America in 1894, and on New Year's Day he sent me a breezy, though somewhat prophetic, letter from New York.

“ Hotel Vendôme, New York,

“ *January 1, 1894.*

“ GOOD MORNING, GEORGE,—How time flies! Old friends and companions dropping off one by one, leaving us older and, I trust, better men. But I am sending these few lines across the broad Atlantic to wish you in '94 all health and continued prosperity. So a drink to ourselves and absent friends.

“ WILL TERRISS ”

That was in 1894. Four days before the coming of Christmas 1897 Will Terriss had himself been laid to rest, amid the heartfelt grief of the old friends and companions who would see his handsome face and hear his cheery voice no more.

It was on December 21 that Terriss was buried at Brompton Cemetery, the funeral procession having passed through streets crowded with sympathetic spectators, and in those streets most of the shops were shuttered and the blinds of the private houses were down.

The death of this popular actor had taken place in circumstances which caused not only widespread horror but aroused the deepest sorrow among all classes of the community.

A few nights previously a man named Richard Archer Prince, aged thirty-two, and describing himself as an actor, had been arrested red-handed and charged at Bow Street.

This was the charge: “ That he did at about twenty minutes past seven P.M. on December 16th kill and slay William Terriss with a knife in Maiden Lane.”

Terriss was stabbed by Archer, "a mysterious-looking individual in a black cloak and slouch hat," just as the actor was stooping to put the key into the private door leading to the stage at the back of the Adelphi in Maiden Lane.

Terriss staggered into the passage of the theatre and then fell, and it was there, with his head supported in the lap of the leading lady, Miss Jessie Milward, that he died.

And while he lay dead behind the scenes a large audience had assembled in the theatre waiting for the curtain to rise on *Secret Service*, the drama in which the murdered man should have played the hero.

Prince or Archer—that was the name we knew him by at the Adelphi, where he had played small parts in the dramas of Pettitt and myself—was known to many members of the profession as "Mad Archer." He was a man who suffered from the mania of persecution. While in a small part in *In the Ranks* he complained to me twice that another actor was trying to "queer" him. A melancholy, saturnine individual, he made few friends, and became possessed with the idea that "everybody was against him."

Archer not only imagined that everybody was persecuting him, but he himself had a persistent habit of persecuting—at least with abusive correspondence—every one who did not at once listen to his demands for employment, or who refused to accept a play, *Colonel Otto*, which he had written, and which he sent to various managers. He sent Mr. Fred Terry *Colonel Otto*, and when Mr. Terry didn't return it at once Archer bombarded him with abusive post cards.

Archer, among other delusions, believed that Terriss had not only kept him out of an engagement at the Adelphi, but had been the means of preventing an appeal to the Royal General Theatrical Fund for assistance being granted.

Archer had a mania for writing letters, and the method in his madness was that he generally asked for financial assistance.

When he was arrested his rooms were searched, and the police found not only letters from ladies of title, but letters from royal personages and political notorieties acknowledging "Mr. Prince's poem." The present King and Queen—then Duke and Duchess of York—had written thanking Prince for his congratulations on the birth of an heir, the present

Prince of Wales. Princess Henry of Battenberg wrote thanking him for his touching lines on the death of her husband, and Mr. Gladstone acknowledged the receipt of a highly complimentary poetical effusion.

But there was another delusion under which the murderer suffered. He had a sister who was rather well known at the time. He believed that Terriss and his sister were in league and were going about together and planning his ruin.

The sister had been to the Adelphi once or twice to see an actor, but the actor was *not* William Terriss.

Prince was tried at the Old Bailey in a ghastly brown fog that filled the grim hall of tragedies on January 10, 1898. Mr. Charles Mathews and Mr. Horace Avory prosecuted, and Mr. Sands was for the defence. On the ascertained facts concerning Prince's career and on the medical evidence the jury could only find that the murderer of William Terriss was insane and not responsible for his action.

If Richard Archer Prince had been recognized as insane, as he should have been years earlier, William Terriss might still be with us.

There is a grim coincidence in the last letter poor Will Terriss, the "Breezy Bill" of a hundred happy theatrical and Bohemian memories, wrote to me.

In the late autumn of 1897 some paragraphs appeared in the theatrical papers concerning a play which I had just completed for a well-known management. Terriss wrote to me to know if I could deal with him for the American rights.

I replied jokingly that I had disposed of the world rights.

Here is Terriss's characteristic letter :

" Adelphi Theatre.

" DEAR GEORGE,—Sorry you have sold all rights for this world. What price the next world ?

" WILL."

Alas, how little did poor Will Terriss imagine that he would have passed to that next world before the play for which he wanted " the next world rights " had been produced ?

In one of the many memorial articles that appeared at the time of the tragedy the writer attributed to Sir Henry Irving the *mot*, I have found a *rara avis* in Terriss."

I have always been under the impression that this was a

mistake. It was apropos of Terriss's early appearance at the Prince of Wales's Theatre under the Bancroft management that the *mot* was first made, and it appeared in the pages of *Fun*.

The Gipsy Earl, the play that I was writing at the time I received the telephone message to tell me that Terriss had been murdered, was produced some months later at the Adelphi.

It was my last play at the old home of melodrama, and in connexion with its production I have one or two reminiscences which may be of interest to old playgoers.

CHAPTER XXXIII

The Gipsy Earl was produced at the Adelphi on the night of August 31, 1898, with a remarkably fine cast, and Fred Terry and Julia Neilson as the hero and heroine. With artists like Edmund Maurice, William Devereux, George Hippesley, John Glendinning, and Miss Keith Wakeman to sustain the serious interest, with Harry Nicholls as 'Lijah Blossom, a village policeman, and Athol Forde and Mrs. Henry Leigh in strong comedy parts, and with Sydney Fairbrother as the runaway boy who fancies himself as "Dashing Dick, the hero of the turnpike road," and Maggie Bowman as his timorous little sweetheart, the melodrama did not fail to appeal to Adelphi audiences.

I have said that there were incidents connected with the production which are interesting reminiscences.

When we were about to complete the cast I sat one morning in the manager's room at the Adelphi to interview the ladies and gentlemen who were willing to undertake small parts for which the salary would be a few pounds a week.

And suddenly there came smiling into the room the stage idol of my boyhood and the idol of the youth of many thousands of playgoers in England, on the Continent, and in America.

As Lydia Thompson came towards me and held out her hand I could not suppress an exclamation of surprise.

"My dear lady," I exclaimed, "what on earth do you want here? You aren't surely anxious to play Adelphi heroines?"

Lydia Thompson laughed. "If I were it would be no use," she said, "because the heroine is fixed up. I know that. Julia Neilson is your star this season."

"Yes—that is our good fortune. Have you come to congratulate me on it?"

"No—I've come on business—serious business. I hear

there are several small parts not yet filled. Be a nice kind man and give me one of them."

I don't think I said anything for quite a minute and a half. I was trying to realize the situation. Lydia Thompson, the bright delightful comedienne, the charming dancer, who had in her day captured all Europe and all America; Lydia Thompson—whose talent when I was first taken, a boy, to the theatre made her the talk of playgoing London—had come to me forty years afterwards to ask me to give her a small part in an Adelphi melodrama.

It was in the very early 'sixties—I am not sure that it was not in the late 'fifties—that I had given my boy's heart to a dainty little lady who played so archly and danced so delightfully in *Magic Toys*, and the charming little lady of my youthful adoration was Lydia Thompson.

Lydia Thompson made her first appearance as a principal dancer in 1852. Soon afterwards she made a great success as Little Silverhair in *Harlequin and the Three Bears* at the Haymarket. In 1856 she was dancing her way through the theatres of Germany. She visited the principal capitals of Europe. In one town—I think it was Budapest—the students took the horses from her carriage and drew her in triumph from the theatre to her hotel, and on the balcony she made a speech.

She went to America, and was hailed as the greatest and most charming burlesque actress of the day. Torchlight processions took place in her honour, and shoeblacks presented her with a silver wreath.

As she sat opposite me that August morning in 1898 my memory wandered back to H. J. Byron's *Der Freischutz*, produced at the Prince of Wales's in 1866. And Lydia Thompson played the principal part because Marie Wilton was bidding good-bye to burlesque.

Lydia Thompson's troupe of Blondes! I remember the sensation they made in America and here, and did not Pauline Markham—beautiful Pauline Markham—tell us afterwards how, because he had written an insulting article about the Blondes, the fair Lydia had horsewhipped the editor of the *Chicago Times*?

And then she came back and gave us *Bluebeard*, with Rachel Sanger and Lal Brough and Willie Edouin.

She married John Christian Tilbury, a nephew of Mr. Tilbury, of the firm of coachbuilders, Tilbury, Son, and Cooke, in the Marylebone Road.

The Tilburys were the inventors of the Tilbury and the Tilbury tugs, and Mr. Tilbury, sen., was the first person to introduce rubber tyres. They were exhibited in the 1851 Exhibition, but Sir Richard Mayne, the head of the police, would not sanction the use of them as he said they would be a danger to the public.

John Christian Tilbury, Lydia Thompson's husband, was killed at Brentwood while riding a horse, All Fours, in the Union Hunt Steeplechase.

The horse fell at a fence. Tilbury was carried on a gate to the farmhouse and Lydia Thompson was sent for, and she arrived in time to see him die.

Afterwards she married Mr. Alexander Henderson, the well-known theatrical manager, and in '78 she was playing at the Folly Theatre, of which her husband was the proprietor.

And here in 1898 was the world-famous artist asking me for a small part in an Adelphi drama.

Alas, there was nothing to suit the fair and evergreen Lydia, and I had to tell her so and bid her a smiling adieu.

But a year later she was playing a very fine part indeed. She was the honoured recipient of a magnificent and ever-to-be-remembered complimentary benefit at the Lyceum.

What a house it was! What a programme! The benefit was on Tuesday afternoon. On the Monday night there was a throng of women already waiting at the pit doors and the gallery doors.

There was a reception on the stage, which was crowded with well-known actors and actresses, and Sir Henry Irving stepped to the footlights to recall the time when he and Lionel Brough, then unknown to London audiences, had supported Lydia Thompson in rollicking burlesque, and Lydia Thompson delivered a reply written for her by W. S. Gilbert telling of the wonderful changes which had taken place in things theatrical "since that dim age when little Silverhair tripped on the stage," and the address ended with "God bless you, God bless me, God bless us all!" and the house

rose and cheered itself hoarse and white handkerchiefs waved frantically.

Lydia Thompson sent me an autographed programme of that benefit with a charming little letter, and jokingly reminded me that I had promised not to forget her when I was casting my next play.

It was while I was still sitting in the manager's room at the Adelphi under the influence of the happy memories of Lydia Thompson that another famous player of the days of my youth had entered.

The lady who stood smiling before me was Miss Marriott.

It was a curious and I might say a dramatic coincidence that I should, on this sunny August morning in 1898, meet both Lydia Thompson and Miss Marriott for the first time in circumstances which enabled us to converse.

It was a dramatic coincidence because both the ladies had delighted me in my earliest days as a playgoer and both were stage favourites when I was a schoolboy.

And both had made their first appearance in London in the early 'fifties. Lydia Thompson had made her debut in 1852 at Her Majesty's, and Miss Marriott had appeared for the first time in London in 1854 at Drury Lane, playing Bianca in the tragedy of *Fazio*.

My first memory of Miss Marriott is a cloudy one. She played The Angel of Midnight at the Princess's in '62, but I remember the play better than the players.

But they were not the old days of Drury Lane or the Princess's that came back to me as Miss Marriott entered the little room at the Adelphi where I sat waiting to interview the ladies and gentlemen who were anxious to fill the small parts in *The Gipsy Earl*.

The old days that came back to me were the old days of Sadler's Wells.

And my memory in one swift flight was back again, not in the old Phelps's days when I was taken as a child to the Wells, but in the later days when I had come to man's estate.

It was the lady who anticipated the divine Sarah and played Hamlet at Sadler's Wells in 1864, not only to the satisfaction but the delight of the audience—I was one of them—who in August 1898 came to me because she had

heard that some of the small parts in my new Adelphi drama were not yet filled!

Fortunately there was a small part that I was able to offer to the lady who, five and thirty years previously, shone as a star where Phelps had for many years shed his dazzling rays upon the land, not of promise, but of performance.

When the engagement had been settled and Miss Marriott had bidden me good-bye and taken the part home with her, the memories of Sadler's Wells which her coming had aroused still remained with me.

I remembered that that fine old actor, Henry Marston, had been one of Phelps's principal players at the Wells. He had played with the elder Kean, with Kemble, and with Macready. When Phelps "rescued Sadler's Wells from clowns and mountebanks" Henry Marston was his right hand. And I remember being present at the benefit given at the Lyceum to Henry Marston when his notable career had been brought to a close by ill-health. He made his first appearance in 1824, and it was in 1879 that many of the best-known actors on the English stage appeared at the Lyceum in *Much Ado About Nothing* to do him the honour he had so nobly striven to deserve.

And as my memory wandered back to the theatre of which Miss Marriott had at one time been the bright particular star and done her best to carry on the Phelps tradition, a tragedy leapt to my mind.

I remembered that in 1863 Charles Fechter, then in his glory at the Lyceum, announced that Mr. Phelps and Mr. Walter Montgomery had been engaged "and would shortly appear." Fechter had engaged Phelps, but preferred to pay him to walk about.

But Fechter in time got tired of paying for nothing, and asked Phelps to play the ghost to his Hamlet. Then there was trouble, and eventually, on the advice of Charles Dickens, who was friendly to both actors, the Phelps engagement was cancelled and Fechter was Hamlet all by himself.

Few remember much of Fechter's Hamlet to-day, but all old playgoers remember him in *Ruy Blas* and *Bel Demonio* and *The Duke's Motto*. The Duke's motto became a catch phrase, and I remember that Charles White, the well-known

bookmaker, had as his sign on the racecourse "The Duke's Motto—'I Am Here,' " which was a very excellent motto for a ready-money bookmaker.

But the tragedy that leapt to my mind as I sat and chatted with the lady who had played Hamlet, and was willing to play a part of a few lines at the Adelphi, was that of Walter Montgomery, the popular tragedian—he also had played Hamlet—who was engaged by Fechter at the same time as Phelps.

The fate of Walter Montgomery is probably one of the forgotten tragedies of the stage, and yet when it happened it thrilled all playgoing London.

In the middle 'sixties a very pretty and charming French actress came to the Princess's Theatre to play Juliet. Stella Colas was a young and beautiful Juliet, and that was all, but being French and fascinating, her daring Shakespearean adventure caused any amount of talk and discussion.

Stella Colas came back to London the following year and appeared as Juliet again, and one of the leading critics of the day declared with more pith than politeness that she was "obtrusively self-conscious, showy, jerky, artificial as a puppet," and that as Juliet she was "still abominable."

The Entente in those days had not extended to French performances of Shakespeare on the Bard's own territory.

Walter Montgomery was the English Romeo to the French Juliet, and it was the tragedy of Walter Montgomery that the Marriott memories of Sadler's Wells brought back to me.

Montgomery, whose real name was Richard Tomlinson, was born in America, came over here young, and got a berth at Welch, Margetson and Co.'s in the City, but, like one of our now famous actor-managers, he deserted the shirt and collar trade for the sock and buskin. He drifted from drapery into the drama and became in time a recognized Shakespearean actor, and his renown as a leading man justified the famous Fechter in coupling him with Phelps in his announcement of important engagements.

In July 1871, the year of the Paris Commune, Hollingshead brought over a French company from Brussels with a light, bright repertoire. It only remained a few weeks, and then, on the last day of July, Walter Montgomery, greatly daring,



CHARLES FECHTER

considering the theatre and the time of year, took the Gaiety for a legitimate season, and, alas, Shakespeare on this occasion spelt not only ruin but suicide.

Poor Montgomery lost heavily at the Gaiety in his short season, and at the end of July Julia Matthews was back at the theatre with *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein*.

On August 30 Walter Montgomery was married at St. George's, Hanover Square, to Miss L. Bigelow, a young actress who had made a success on the stage and had played Pauline in *The Lady of Lyons*.

On September 2 he committed suicide in a house between Bond Street and Albemarle Street, where he had rooms on the first floor.

Montgomery and his bride had driven from Waterloo to the house in a hansom. Montgomery stepped out of the cab, ran up to his bedroom and shot himself, and when his wife, who had followed him, got upstairs it was to find her husband lying dead by his own hand.

Charles Albert Fechter—I remember that a good many people pronounced his name "Feshter"—had a German father and an English mother. He was one of the most popular romantic actors of the 'sixties, and gave a foreign touch to the romantic drama which was not without its appeal.

His grace and variety of gesture were something new to the English stage, and his methods played havoc with many old conventions. He not only looked the hero of romance, but behaved as such, and if the matinée girl had been invented in those days Fechter would have been her idol.

I remember him best as Fabien and Louis dei Franchi in *The Corsican Brothers*. I have a melancholy remembrance of his Edgar in *The Master of Ravenswood*, but he is indelibly impressed on my memory as Obenreizer in Charles Dickens's and Wilkie Collins's *No Thoroughfare*.

And these playland pictures from the long ago all came back vividly to my mental vision as I sat chatting one August morning in 1898 with Miss Marriott, who, like Fechter, played *Hamlet* to me while I sat in the pit in the days of my youth.

Miss Marriott duly appeared in *The Gipsy Earl*.

an old gipsy woman admirably, and delivered a dramatic speech—a curse—with all the distinction and force of the fine old school of the 'sixties, when the children of Thespis spoke to be heard and did not think it beneath their dignity to “act.”

At the end of the run of *The Gipsy Earl* my connexion with the old Adelphi Theatre closed. It had lasted with intervals for nearly seventeen years.

CHAPTER XXXIV

It was W. S. Gilbert who was responsible for the phrase "Adelphi guests."

A well-known actor told me the other day that his daughter while playing for a kinema firm heard the producer ring up the training school attached to the establishment and say to the manager, "Send me down a dozen assorted guests at once."

In the 'sixties and well on into the 'seventies the "Adelphi guests," whether they were dukes or earls or the newly rich, were played by the ordinary supers, and they attended balls and receptions in the oddest specimens of evening dress imaginable.

It was not until Ludwig Barnay and the Saxe-Meiningen Company came to Drury Lane in 1881 that any serious attention was paid by stage managers to the conduct and demeanour of a crowd. The crowd groaned simultaneously and shouted simultaneously, and betrayed not the slightest interest in the proceedings except when the cue came to groan or shout or cheer.

Augustus Harris went over to see the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen to arrange for the engagement of the company, with Herr Barnay at its head.

As he always liked a travelling companion he took Henry Pettitt with him. They made a straight journey without stops, and early in the morning after a night in the train Harris woke up and gazed sleepily out of the window. He saw a broad, swiftly flowing river. He roused Pettitt.

"That's a fine river," he said. "You were a schoolmaster once. What is it?"

Pettitt gazed out of the window with sleepy eyes and said, "I used to teach writing, not geography," and went off to sleep again. And so did Harris.

They had had their first view of the Rhine without knowing it.

The crowd in the Saxe-Meiningen productions at Drury Lane was a revelation to the British stage manager, and soon after that the crowd began to receive as much attention at rehearsal as the principals.

The "Adelphi guests" had disappeared when I came to the theatre, that is to say, so far as the ordinary super-guests were concerned.

The stage was getting into society, and society was getting on to the stage, and there were quite a large number of well-bred and well-educated young men and women, eager to adopt the dramatic profession, who were willing to gain experience by "walking on."

In the crowd in *In the Ranks* were players of small parts—Richard Archer Prince, the murderer of Terriss, was one of them—the daughter of a famous London writer, the wife of a London doctor, the sister of a distinguished naval officer, and a young lady who had the right to describe herself as the daughter of a hundred earls.

Charles Harris—Gus Harris's brother—was a stage manager of considerable reputation and in general demand as a producer of spectacular pieces, and he was engaged by the Gattis to produce *In the Ranks*.

Now Charlie Harris—he was known variously as Charliar Harris, "The Stage Damager," etc., but nobody ever called him Charles—was one of the old school of stage directors who were given to the use of strong language when anything went wrong at rehearsal or the small people were not up to the mark, and on occasions he could swear as terribly as, according to Uncle Toby, our Armies did in Flanders.

I remember Charlie Harris on one occasion, while rehearsing a burlesque, requesting the ladies of the chorus not to crowd together in the scene "like a vital fluidy lot of sardines."

When he came to the Adelphi to produce *In the Ranks* the new quality of the "Adelphi guests" paralysed his powers of expression.

He came to me one day after a long and trying rehearsal with the crowd, and in a voice broken with emotion he said:

"For Heaven's sake, ask the Gattis to get rid of those bally aristocrats and give me something I can swear at or the scene won't be worth a d——."

Charlie Harris, apart from his flow of language, which in his day was not looked upon as abnormal, was a very good stage manager indeed.

I remember meeting him just before the production of a big show which he was stage managing, and in his picturesque way he said to me, "I think I've done it this time! My big scene will take their bally eyeballs out."

Looking back upon my forty years' connexion with the stage I can see no change that has been greater than that in the language and demeanour of the stage manager and producer to the small part people and the crowd.

In the old days there were managers who were notorious for their insulting remarks at rehearsal.

There was a manageress who could be very sarcastic at times, not only with young beginners, but with the more important members of the company.

One day she was directing a rehearsal while her husband sat by her and looked on.

A young actor who was rather sensitive had recently joined the company, and this was his first rehearsal. After the manageress had made one or two sarcastic comments upon his reading of the part he stepped towards her, bowed politely, and said in a voice that the whole company could hear, "Madam, if you insult me again I shall pull your husband's nose!"

To-day rehearsals are conducted with scrupulous courtesy to all concerned.

A bishop and his wife might, for instance, attend the whole of the rehearsals of a Drury Lane pantomime, and they would not hear from Mr. Arthur Collins or from any of his assistants a word addressed to the company that they—the bishop and his wife—might not, when they got home, repeat to their children—if they had any.

Under the old regime at the Lane things were not always so pleasant. When Charlie Harris was assisting his brother, the bluff though generally genial Augustus, they would even occasionally exchange language with each other.

But my memories of the Lane go back long before the Harris regime.

The first memory of the National Theatre that I have that is not a cloudy one is of Phelps as "Manfred." That was in 1863. I can see the lonely figure on the great stage now, and I can hear the tumultuous welcome of the packed house to the great tragedian whom Chatterton had invited to return to Drury Lane, his "rightful home."

I am bound to confess that the management did not share the enthusiasm of the audience over *Manfred*, for not long after the experiment Mr. F. B. Chatterton made a managerial utterance which became classical. He said that "Shakespeare spelt ruin and Byron bankruptcy," and Chatterton let E. T. Smith have Phelps for Astley's.

I have a lively recollection of one remarkable winter night in 1867. It was January 22. We had a box for the pantomime, and we got to Drury Lane at last in a four-wheel cab drawn by three horses, two abreast and one in front, and a man walking by the side of the animals to help them up when they fell down. January 22, 1867, was long remembered in theatrical circles as the night when pedestrians skated or slid along the streets because no other means of progression was possible.

The Drury Lane pantomime was famous in the 'sixties as it is now. But there was considerably more opposition, as half the theatres in London had Christmas pantomimes. Those were the days of the famous clown, and the harlequinade was still a great feature of Christmas shows.

They were the days of Harry Bolen and Harry Payne, and the Great Little Rowella and the Lauris and the Lupinos. In the 'sixties I saw a treble harlequinade with three famous clowns in it.

The harlequinade was a very important part of the pantomime programme in the 'sixties and the 'seventies. The question to managers was not in those days "Who is to be your principal comedian?" or "Who is to be your principal boy?" but "Who is to be your clown?"

When *Puss in Boots* was produced at Drury Lane in 1869 the programme commenced with a performance by "Her Majesty's Servants" of a farce entitled *My Wife's Out*, and

the harlequinade consisted of four scenes and a final grand transformation scene.

There were two clowns, two pantaloons, two harlequins, and two columbines. The pantomime troupe danced a *pas de quatre*, harlequin and columbine danced a polonaise, a bolero, and a hornpipe, and there was a full ballet, *The Girls of the Period*, in the second scene.

Among the specialities in the fourth scene we had Professor Peterson's troupe of performing dogs, Le Petit Rarey and the Smallest Horse in the World, and the Albanian Violinists.

Another scene was the deck of a warship. It was manned by three hundred children, and the Infant Drummer, Master Vokins, performed on board.

As a specimen of the sort of scene they gave us in the harlequinade in those days, here is the synopsis of what happened on the deck of that man-of-war :

"Morning—Preparations for a voyage—Inspection by the Duke of Edinburgh—Rifle drill, cutlass exercise, and the march past—Leave-taking—'The Girl I Left Behind Me'—Weigh anchor—'I'm Afloat, I'm Afloat'—The boatswain's song, and hornpipe by sixty able-bodied young British tars—The enemy in sight—The action, and success of the flag that's braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze."

When that scene opened it was close upon midnight, and there was the Fairy Home of Industry, the grand transformation scene of the harlequinade, yet to come.

I can remember that harlequinade, and I know that I stayed to the very end, and so did the rest of the audience.

In the old-fashioned harlequinades we had in addition to the famous clowns pantomimists like Paul Herring and Fred Evans, and the Lauri troupe and the Leclerq troupe, of which the head was Charles Leclerq, the father of two of the most refined and charming actresses of their day, Carlotta and Rose Leclerq.

And Fawdon Vokes was Harlequin and Jessie Vokes was Columbine, and Rosina Vokes was Harlequina. This was before the days when the Vokes family came to fame and fortune, and Fred Vokes was an excellent entertainment in himself, and Victoria and Rosina Vokes were not only brilliant comedienues but actresses of the front rank.

Old playgoers remember *The Belles of the Kitchen* and *Fun in a Fog*. And they remember Victoria Vokes as Amy Robsart at Drury Lane, and they have many a happy memory of Rosina Vokes, the most delightful and dainty of comedienues, who became the wife of Mr. Cecil Clay, and whose death in America when she was at the height of her fame filled the hearts of playgoers on both sides of the Atlantic with sorrow.

The Vokes family were the "Vokes Children" when they began their stage career, and they played with Flexmore and Phelps and Charles Matthews and Creswick and Barry Sullivan before they became famous in Drury Lane pantomime.

I remember Dion Boucicault's *Formosa* at Drury Lane in '69, with Katherine Rodgers as the soiled heroine, Henry Irving as Compton Kerr, the gentlemanly villain, and bright and dainty Maggie Brennan as the Earl of Eden. *Formosa* was the wonderful play which saw one of the 'Varsity crews sit astride a form to practise for the boat race. And the hero, the stroke of one of the crews, was kidnapped and locked up, and escaped just in time to leap into his boat and win the race.

Andrew Halliday, after making a huge success with *The Great City*, supplied the Lane with historical drama for many years. *The Lady of the Lake*, *Kenilworth*, and *Amy Robsart* drew the town.

In 1873 dear old E. L. Blanchard, the Drury Lane evergreen, had a second innings. He gave us *The Children in the Wood* at Christmas and in September a "pantomimical eccentricity" which he called *Nobody in London*—not a particularly promising title for a theatre with the holding capacity of the Lane.

In the late 'seventies the Drury Lane management was in difficulties.

Mr. F. B. Chatterton had done his best to deserve a better fate.

But it was all in vain, and on the evening of Saturday, December 7, 1878, Chatterton closed his dramatic season.

On the Monday Herr Bandmann took the theatre for a brief spell in order to allow us to see his *Hamlet*.

On Boxing Day E. L. Blanchard succeeded Shakespeare

and gave us *Cinderella*, which has always been considered one of the most "drawing" subjects for pantomime.

The famous Vokes family were in it, Julia Warden and Miss Hudspeth were the spiteful sisters, Victoria Vokes was *Cinderella*, and Jessie Vokes was the Prince.

But right in the middle of the run of *Cinderella* Drury Lane closed its doors. There was no treasury.

I have told the story of the events that led up to the disaster, because the Christmas catastrophe is unique in the history of the National Theatre.

It was on February 4, 1879, that the theatre closed suddenly while the pantomime was in full swing.

And that was the end of the management of Mr. F. B. Chatterton, for whom Shakespeare had spelt ruin, Byron bankruptcy, and Pantomime had put up the shutters.

And then there arose a very active and enterprising young man who had been stage manager with Edgar Bruce while I was winning my spurs at the little theatre in Soho.

This young man sprang into the imminent deadly breach, and Augustus Harris became known to the world and through the *World* as Druriolanus.

It is a legend in Theatreland that Augustus Harris took Drury Lane with a capital of £500 at his disposal.

At any rate, he told me himself that he was not afraid of losing his money at the Lane, because he hadn't any to lose.

Augustus Harris, senior, was one of the most famous stage managers in Europe. His son reminded John Ryder of this when the old actor somewhat testily protested against the idea of young Gus Harris as the manager of Drury Lane.

"Oh," replied Ryder, "so you think you're a stage manager because your father was one? Well, my father was a pilot, but I should be sorry for the ship that I had to bring up the Thames."

Young Augustus was sent to school in Paris, and when he left school he had a berth in the house of Erlanger and Co. as a foreign correspondent, but when his father died he abandoned the desk for the drama.

He was assistant stage manager for a time with Mapleson of the Italian Opera.

He produced a pantomime at the Crystal Palace for Charles

Wyndham, and when I first met him he was playing Harry Greenlanes in *Pink Dominoes* at the Criterion.

His career at Drury Lane is theatrical history. He had his ups and downs, but he had big ideas, high spirits, and fertility of resource, and he managed to be the Napoleon of Theatreland without having the worry of Waterloo or the ennui of Elba.

I have told the story of Gus Harris when he was at the Royalty, and how he used to tell me his dreams of Drury Lane, and give off bits of the drama which Pettitt and he and Meritt were going to do if he got the lease of the big theatre.

And Paul Meritt gave me his ideas too. In quite sober seriousness he took me into the lobby of the theatre one day, where the statues of Kean and Kemble and Garrick and Shakespeare are, and he said, "If I go to the Lane I shall be a national author, and one day my bust may be here with my predecessors."

Augustus Harris did get his bust put up at Drury Lane after his death.

But it was outside.

Paul Meritt had his share of success at the Lane, but he fell out of the Pettitt-Harris collaboration.

After he left the Lane he nourished a grievance against Harris, and he used to write him four- and six-paged letters about twice a week.

Whenever I went to see Meritt, who lived in Pembroke Square, Kensington, he always insisted upon reading these letters, of which he took press copies, to me.

I don't think Gus Harris replied to the bombardment after the first three or four. At any rate, one day when I called to see Paul I found him triumphant.

"I read my last letter to Harris to you, didn't I?" he said. "Well, that's a fortnight ago, and he hasn't replied. My boy, I've knocked him speechless!"

Gus Harris at first played parts in the dramas, and, among others, he played Icilius, and was ever afterwards chaffed as "The Penny Icilius." It was not vanity that made him act for a time. It was his desire to qualify for the Drury Lane Fund.

Augustus Harris was a hearty, genial man with a bluff and

boisterous manner, but on occasions he could wrap himself in a cloak of dignity.

Once in the long ago, when Arthur Pinero was just beginning to come to the front, there was a theatrical dinner at the Star and Garter, Richmond, with a large professional attendance and speeches afterwards.

Pinero made a little speech, and something he said quite innocently was taken by Harris to reflect on the policy at Drury Lane. When the company filed out after the banquet Gus Harris planted himself in the doorway and waited until Pinero came along. Then he eyed him up and down in the good old melodramatic manner and exclaimed :

“ Mushroom ! ”

Some years afterwards Arthur Pinero had made his mark, and a very big mark, as a dramatic author, and he found himself at the Green Room Club late one night when Augustus Harris was there.

Several of the members remembered that since the dinner the manager and author had not spoken to each other.

One of them—I think it was Henry Hamilton—went to Gus and said, “ Come and speak to Pinero. What’s the good of nursing an old grievance ? ”

Harris had his cloak on—a sort of military cloak which he generally wore over evening dress. Presently, after evident hesitation, he strode towards Pinero, flung the folds of his cloak over his shoulder, looked the now successful author up and down, and exclaimed :

“ Shakespeare ! ”

I think Druriolanus imagined that he had both offended and atoned monosyllabically, because when he and Pettitt were discussing the title for a new play Harris said, “ What I like best are monosyllabic titles like *Humanity*. ”

During the latter half of the Harris regime Mr. Arthur Collins was the great man’s right hand, and much of the excellent stage-management of the later productions was his, for Harris had a good many irons in the fire, and was beginning to suffer from the ailments to which he eventually succumbed in the prime of life.

Arthur Collins served an artistic apprenticeship in the scene-painting room with Henry Emden, and he had been

an actor, playing parts of all sorts in provincial companies and others, and he brought to the Lane gifts which were not only practical but artistic.

When Augustus Harris died it was generally recognized that Arthur Collins was his legitimate successor.

But Cecil Raleigh told me that he should like the position, and he set seriously to work to try and get it.

Arthur Collins sat still and said nothing, but he formed a company principally among his financial friends, Drury Lane became Limited, and Arthur Collins was appointed the Managing Director.

And Arthur Collins has made a Drury Lane record, for he has been manager of the National Theatre longer than any of his predecessors in the proud position.

CHAPTER XXXV

As I near the end of the nineteenth century in my glances back over fifty years of Footlight Land I remember that I have been a playgoer for close upon sixty years and a writer of plays for forty of them.

And both as playgoer and playwright I am, as I look back, impressed by the great changes I have seen not only in the form and character of public entertainment, but in the taste of the public in the matter of theatrical fare.

The luxury of woe that the playgoer of the 'sixties loved to indulge in ceased to be in demand long before the century closed. Women ceased to flock to the theatres to have a good cry. It was not convenient to the fair to leave the playhouse with tears running down their cheeks and go straight to a fashionable restaurant for supper after the theatre.

West-End playgoers were the first to control their emotions and check the briny tears that at one time had been permitted to flow freely.

Even in the gallery there were protests against too much sobbing in sympathy with the heroine.

[I was in the gallery at the Adelphi one night during the run of *The White Rose*, the drama in which Mrs. Patrick Campbell made Elizabeth Cromwell so pathetically appealing. During one of the pathetic passages a girl in the gallery began to sob audibly.

"Don't be a fool, Lil," said the young man who was sitting next to her. "What's the good of crying about a woman who's been dead for hundreds of years!"

But in the 'sixties we were not ashamed to take our pleasures sadly, and we revelled in scenes of deep emotion.

In those days the house bill of the minor and the transpontine theatres was a long, flimsy sheet with plenty of big

black lettering on it. However gingerly you handled those bills some of the black came off on you, and so it happened that when you wiped away a sympathetic tear with your finger you frequently left a black streak down your cheek.

I once saw the audience turn out of the old "Vic"—Queen Victoria's Own Theayter, as Arthur Sketchley's Mrs. Brown called it—after the performance of an old-fashioned drama of the weepy-weepy order, and the faces of the crowd were a study in black and white.

And even at the West End theatres, where the programme was daintily printed and scented by Rimmel, the taste for domestic scenes with the humour and pathos deftly mingled was common to all classes of playgoers.

The domestic note was the dominant note in some of the best and most successful plays of the period. The Englishman's heart was in the Englishman's home, and so was the Englishwoman's.

Home life had not become flat life, and the majority of Londoners did not lunch and dine at restaurants. The meal of the day was the middle-day meal with the middle classes, and tea was a family function round a home table. Even when the late dinner came into fashion the hour was nearer to 6.30 than 8.30, and so the theatre hour was 7 in the West and 6.30 in the East, and at most houses there was half-price at nine o'clock for the late-comers.

The programme lasted till midnight and often later, for in those days there was no Act of Parliament to limit our hours of refreshment.

In the West End houses there was always a farce, generally a screaming farce, for the early-comers, and then probably a domestic drama of two or three acts, and after that a burlesque or an extravaganza, and frequently the long entertainment wound up with another screaming farce.

I remember that my father and mother went to the Festival Performance at Her Majesty's Theatre in January 1858, when our Princess Royal was married to Prince Frederick William of Prussia.

My parents brought back the Festival programme, and I found it some years ago in going over my mother's papers.

On that occasion the performance commenced at half-past

seven with Shakespeare's tragedy of *Macbeth*. Phelps was Macbeth, and Helen Faucit was Lady Macbeth. The three witches were played by Sam Emery—the father of Mrs. Cyril Maude—and Messrs. Ray and Lewis Ball. The second officer was played by Mr. Lickfold, who was the father of Charles Warner.

At the end of the play the National Anthem was sung, and the conductor of the music was Julius Benedict, and after the National Anthem had been sung with the assistance of six principal vocalists and Benedict's Vocal Association of three hundred voices, there was a farce!

The farce was *Twice Killed*, by John Oxenford, and in that Mr. and Mrs. Keeley, Mrs. Leigh Murray, and Pattie Oliver appeared.

Fancy a screaming farce after a Festival Performance of *Macbeth* and the National Anthem!

But the farces in those days were classics, and leading comedians and comediennes appeared in them and made reputations in them.

Dramatists like Maddison Morton became famous for their farces, and it was quite the usual thing for a programme, even when it was Shakespearean, to commence with a farce and to end with a farce.

The first farce was never called a curtain-raiser in those days. It was an item of the entertainment, and a very important item, and the last farce was frequently a good forty minutes of fun.

Some of the best-known actors and actresses of the day played in the farces, and many of them were associated in the minds of playgoers with the characters they sustained in the favourite farces of the time. Who could imagine a star actor or actress to-day famous in a farce?

The 'sixties and the 'seventies were the golden years of the screaming farce. There was a screaming farce before and after the historical, romantic, emotional, or domestic drama.

And although you had a screaming farce before a domestic drama or a domestic comedy, the drama or the comedy was frequently followed by a burlesque.

Sometimes you had a comic drama preceded by a two-act comedietta and followed by a two-act farcical comedy.

When John S. Clark was at the Haymarket in the 'seventies I remember that the programme commenced with *Among the Breakers*, a two-act comedy by John Brougham, was followed by *Red Tape*, a two-act comic drama by Henry J. Byron, and concluded with *Fox and Goose*, a two-act farcical comedy by William Brough.

Even at Drury Lane, when Mr. and Mrs. Dion Boucicault—Miss Agnes Robertson—were playing Conn and Moya in the famous Irish drama, *The Shaughraun*, a drama in three acts and fifteen elaborate scenes, with Will Terriss as Captain Molyneux and Shiel Barry as Harvey Duff, and Sylvia Hodson and Rose Leclercq, J. B. Howard, David Fisher, and Henry Sinclair in the cast, in 1875, the performance commenced with a screaming farce, *The White Hat*, and after *The Shaughraun* we had another farce, *A Nabob for an Hour*, to finish up with.

The domestic dramas of that period are many of them now classics of the stage, notably those written by Mr. H. T. Craven, an admirable actor of the Robson school as well as an expert playwright with a remarkable gift for deftly mingling the pathetic and the humorous. But he was a past-master in the art of provoking the laughter that is akin to tears.

He wrote *Milky White* for Robson. Robson died, and the author produced the play at the merry little Strand, and himself acted the part he had intended for Robson. I saw *Milky White* at the Strand when it was first produced in '64, and I have never forgotten Craven's performance.

His *Chimney Corner* was produced in '61, and his *Miriam's Crime* in '63, but they are still quoted as memorable examples of the domestic drama that the playgoer of the 'sixties loved.

And *Meg's Diversion*! I saw it at the Royalty in '66 with Craven as Jasper and sweet Pattie Oliver as the heroine. It was a two-act comedy played in front of Burnand's famous burlesque of *Black-Eyed Susan*.

Pattie Oliver, who played Susan, had sung "Pretty See-usan, don't say No!" one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five times while the run was on. Yet to-day we who remember see her quite as distinctly in *Meg's Diversion* as we do in the burlesque, and I have only to close my eyes to see the pathetic realization on the stage of the picture *Broken Vows* even now.



T. F. ROBSON AND H. WIGAN



The Craven plays were full of humour, but there was always the human note in them and the home note, and the characters, though often quaint and eccentric, were always real sketches of human nature and not burlesque.

The pathos and humour of English home life were unfailing in their appeal to the playgoer in the 'sixties.

H. J. Byron found relief from burlesque in comic drama of the domestic order.

I remember the Saturday night in January 1875 when James and Thorn produced Byron's *Our Boys* at the Vaudeville, and how we sat waiting and expecting the familiar Byron jokes.

But the great appeal of *Our Boys* to the popular audience was the domestic appeal, and its run of four years and a quarter at the Vaudeville was due to the domestic note in the plot and the homeliness of the characters.

David James, the immortal "Butterman" with his pound of inferior "Dosset" and his ultipomatum, and Tom Thorne, the Talbot Champneys, were out of the bill again and again, but *Our Boys* ran on to undiminished receipts.

David James told me that when during the run he and Thorne went for a holiday in Spain they arranged to have the nightly receipts telegraphed to them.

The nightly returns remained so high and so steady that David James said to his partner one night when they opened a telegram in Seville, "Tom, I ought to reduce your salary, and you ought to reduce mine. We evidently aren't the draw we thought we were."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Tom Thorne.

"Well," said David, throwing the telegram across to him, "*Our Boys* is playing to as much money without us as it was with us."

And it was.

The Vaudeville was a famous burlesque house, and the actors who appeared in comedy, even in classical comedy, used to play the principal parts in burlesque in the later part of the entertainment.

I remember when *The School for Scandal* was played with William Farren as Sir Peter, Amy Fawsitt as Lady Teazle, Herman Vezin as Sir Oliver, Henry Neville Charles, and John

Clayton Joseph, Tom Thorne appeared after it with David James and the famous Vaudeville company in *Romulus and Remus, or The Two Rum'uns*, by Robert Reece, with Nellie Power, who was then the bright particular star of Vaudeville burlesque.

Nellie Power was one of the stage idols of my youth.

She started her professional career at the old Regent Hall in Westminster, and her salary then was five and twenty shillings a week. But the song that I remember her best in in her music-hall days was "La-di-da!"

He wore a penny flower in his coat,

La-di-da!

A penny paper collar round his throat,

La-di-da!

In his hand a penny stick,

In his teeth a penny pick,

And a penny in his pocket.

La-di-da!

The Pickwick was the cheapest cigar kept in the glass-covered boxes divided into compartments which were on every tobacconist's counter in those days. The cigars were in divisions labelled from sixpence down to a penny, and the Pickwick was "the penny smoke."

All the young men of the day admired Nellie Power, and one or two of them wanted to marry her.

It is noteworthy how many Nellies have been among the adored ones, to instance only four—Nelly Moore, Nelly Bromley, Nelly Farren, and Nellie Power.

It was of Nelly Moore, a charming young actress who played Ada Ingot to Sothorn's David Garrick, and who died in her sweet and gentle youth, that Harry Leigh wrote :

I've her photograph from Lacy's ; that delicious little face is

*Smiling on me as I'm sitting (in a draught from yonder door).
And often in the night falls, when a precious little light falls
From the wretched tallow candles on my gloomy second floor
(For I have not got the gaslight in my gloomy second floor),
Comes an echo, "Nelly Moore!"*

It is interesting, perhaps, at the present time to remember

that Charles Wyndham, who afterwards made a great success as David Garrick, played it once in German in Berlin. It was very, very long ago. I wonder whether Sir Charles remembers it.

Robert Reece and H. J. Byron supplied most of the burlesques for the Vaudeville.

Robert Reece, who was my constant companion in the 'eighties and up to the time of his death, was a most amiable man. He was a scholar, a poet, a musician, and, like Byron, an inveterate punster.

He was the most skilful librettist of his day, and was Farnie's right hand. He collaborated with Farnie in *Les Cloches de Corneville*, and had a hand in nearly all the Farnie successes, and, in addition, he wrote burlesque for nearly all the burlesque houses in London when burlesque was as dominant a feature of theatrical entertainment as musical comedy is to-day.

But poor Robert Reece was utterly unbusinesslike, and because he was always hard up he made bad bargains and sold all his work outright for money down instead of retaining an interest in it.

He was born in Barbados, and he had property there which consisted mainly of sugar plantations, but all the benefit he should have derived from the sugar-cane was destroyed by another sort of cane, a hurricane.

Whenever I met poor Reece with an extra long face I always knew there had been a hurricane in Barbados.

These troubles with his property brought him into the hands of a handsome blue-eyed old gentleman with a white moustache, a lovely complexion, light blue eyes, and a tenor voice.

This old gentleman was supposed to be a solicitor, but as a matter of fact he had never been admitted, and he carried on his business with a relative who was his partner and who *was* a solicitor.

This blue-eyed old gentleman, who was quite a Dickensy character in many ways, had considerable business connexions with theatrical managers and dramatists who occasionally required pecuniary assistance to tide them over periods of stress. He had in his hands at one time the affairs of

H. J. Byron, Wilson Barrett, Robert Buchanan, and Robert Reece.

He managed the properties of some, and to others he made advances. Whenever he had made a particularly good bargain—for himself—he always, after bidding his client good day, if the interview had taken place in the client's home, stood in the doorway of the room and sang "My Pretty Jane" or "When Other Lips" to him.

He once sang "My Pretty Jane" to me as he was bidding me good afternoon, and the song nearly cost me a thousand pounds. I say nearly, because after he had succeeded in inducing me to become security for that amount for a friend whose affairs had drifted into his hands, he presented me with an old George III silver coffee-pot, and I deduct the coffee-pot from the amount.

I remember meeting the blue-eyed "solicitor" with the tenor voice at a pillar-box one day. He was posting a letter to H. J. Byron's father, who was the British Consul at Port au Prince, and the letter was to tell the old gentleman that his son "Harry" was dead.

"Poor Byron!" said the blue-eyed warbler. "I managed all his affairs for him at the finish, and I was his dearest friend." In one sense of the word "dearest" I had no reason to doubt that the statement was justified.

Here is a letter from the late E. C. Engelbach, who was for so many years in partnership with William Greet, to which an interesting story is attached:

"Lyric Theatre,

"May 5, 1914.

"MY DEAR SIMS,—Many thanks indeed for your kindly notice of my old partner's, William Greet, death last week in 'Mustard and Cress.' It was nice, and like you, to call attention to what was jointly done with myself for Wilson Barrett in the days gone by.

"Yours very truly,

"E. C. ENGELBACH."

When Wilson Barrett had begun to reclimb the ladder of fortune with *The Sign of the Cross* and wanted to pay his

creditors in full, the smiling blue-eyed old gentleman with the tenor voice sent in his account, and the total of the account amounted to a good many thousand pounds.

William Greet, who had been in his young manhood an officer of Marines and had left the service because he was always so terribly sick at sea, was with his partner Mr. Engelbach running Barrett and *The Sign of the Cross* at the Lyric Theatre at the time, and Greet and Engelbach, sympathizing with Barrett in the worry he was having with the settlement of his affairs, undertook to see the whole thing through for him and settle accounts with his numerous creditors.

So when Barrett received the account of the singing "solicitor" he handed it over to Greet and Engelbach. Barrett, in consideration of the advances made to him during his period of stress, had assigned to the blue-eyed gentleman all the fees for the plays in which he was concerned either as part-author or part-proprietor.

So an offer was made, and a very generous offer, of half the amount claimed.

On this occasion the blue-eyed one did not sing "My Pretty Jane." He stormed and raved, and insisted that he would have the whole of the amount.

Then Messrs. Greet and Engelbach called in the assistance of a chartered accountant. The result was that instead of Wilson Barrett being in debt many thousands of pounds to his old "legal adviser" it was discovered that the boot was on the other leg, and the singing "solicitor" had a fairly considerable balance in hand which was due to Wilson Barrett.

But he was a very charming old gentleman and a very amusing companion, and with all his eccentricities—expensive eccentricities so far as his clients were concerned—you could not help liking him. And I never look at my silver coffee-pot that represented nearly a thousand pounds to me without seeing the face of a handsome blue-eyed old English gentleman smiling at me, and hearing a sweet tenor voice address me melodiously as "My Pretty Jane."

CHAPTER XXXVI

As the century hastens to its close in these loose pages torn from the book of memory many honoured names that have a right to be upon the roll of remembrance come back to me.

Gustavus Vaughan Brooke and Avonia Jones! How well I remember those two names upon a large poster that told of a farewell appearance previous to his departure for Australia of Gustavus Vaughan Brooke, the favourite tragedian.

G. V. Brooke was one of the great Shakespearean actors of the 'sixties. His Othello was declared by many critics of the period to rank next to the Othello of Salvini.

G. V. Brooke had made money in England, had been to Australia, had lost his money there, and now, after another successful campaign in England, he was about to return to Melbourne.

He sailed in January '66 on board the *London*, bound for Australia, and soon afterwards we heard a story that thrilled all England. The *London* had gone down in the Bay of Biscay. Some of the passengers had been rescued, but a great number had gone down with the ship.

Some of the rescued passengers told the story of the last hours of the life of Gustavus Vaughan Brooke. He was the bravest man on board that ship. He worked at the pumps till the very last. He inspired those around him with courage, even with hope, and the last words he uttered to one who stood near him were these, "If you are saved, remember me to my old friends in Melbourne."

Avonia Jones, his wife, did not accompany him upon this journey. She died a year later of consumption in New York, aged thirty-one.

I suppose it was the tragedy that imprinted that poster indelibly upon my memory, but I can see it now. "Gustavus

Vaughan Brooke and Avonia Jones. Their last appearance in London previous to Mr. Brooke's departure for Australia."

His last appearance in London! Yes. And his last appearance on earth was in the *London*.

In the days before picture cards came to add colour to correspondence the photographs of the dignitaries of the Church, famous advocates, society belles, and members of the Royal Family adorned the windows of the stationers' shops.

But between the Rev. Charles Spurgeon and the Bishop of London would appear the merry face of a star of opéra bouffe, and the Rev. Newman Hall and the Archbishop of Canterbury would be on the closest terms of intimacy—cardboard intimacy—with a dashing little pet of the parterre, the sunniness of whose smile was in proportion to the scantiness of her skirts.

There was always a grand display of the celebrities of the day in the windows of the London Stereoscopic Company, which in my early days had a branch in Cheapside.

Whenever I had to go from Aldersgate Street to the National Bank in Old Broad Street, and at one time that was a daily journey, I always went by way of Cheapside in order to gaze at the display of beauty in the Stereoscopic Company's windows.

It was in that window that I saw—alas, it must be close on fifty years ago!—for the first time a little machine which was called "The Zoetrope, or Wheel of Life," and that was the beginning of the moving pictures which have covered the cities of the world with picture palaces and made Mr. Charlie Chaplin the best-known Englishman that the twentieth century has so far produced, and the Englishman whose features are most familiar to all the inhabitants of the inhabited surface of the terrestrial globe, except, of course, in those places to which as yet the kinema has not penetrated.

There is one particular photograph I remember in the early 'seventies. It was called "A Basket of Mischief," and it was the head of pretty Rose Massey peeping out of basket.

Rose Massey was the Mary Meredith when Lord Dundreary was drawing all London to the Haymarket to see *Our American Cousin* in 1867, but she first came into notice when the elder

Augustus Harris produced *Bluebeard* at Covent Garden in 1871, and Rose Massey was a fascinating Fatima.

But it was when H. J. Montague was the bright particular young star at the Globe and the sole lessee and manager that Rose Massey became a joy to playgoers.

She was Queen Oriana in James Albery's famous three-act romantic legend *Oriana*, with music by Frederic Clay. Montague was her royal consort, and Carlotta Addison was the ever-to-be-remembered little lame fairy.

After the success of *The Two Roses* Albery was always making wild excursions into difficult country, and the playgoer did not always follow him enthusiastically. *Oriana* was one of his many wanderings off the broad road. In the course of his journeys he encountered many dull days and not a few stormy nights.

But to return to *Oriana*. In the cast there were two young ladies who were Queen Oriana's pages, and one of these pages became the most photographed young actress of the day. Her name was Maude Branscombe. I do not think anybody before or since has so generously contributed to the photographic exhibitions of the London shop windows as Maude Branscombe did in the days before picture post cards.

Bella Goodall was a burlesque star of the 'seventies, and her photograph was very much in evidence in the shop windows.

The stars of the music-halls had not come to their own in those days, and their photographs were few and far between in the West End windows.

But the stars of Italian and English opera shone behind the plate-glass occasionally between such lights of the law as Serjeant Ballantine, a very much photographed forensic favourite, Sir Henry James, Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, Douglas Straight, and Montagu Williams.

Montagu Williams, by the by, had a close connexion with the theatre. He had been a touring actor, he married Mrs. Keeley's daughter, Louisa, and with F. C. Burnand wrote *The Isle of St. Tropez*, a poison play, for the St. James's in 1860, but it was not quite so thrilling as *The Hidden Hand*, Tom Taylor's poison drama that drew all London to the Olympic in '64.

Albani, Adelina Patti, Trebelli, and Christine Nilsson were next door window neighbours of Disraeli and Gladstone, Barnum, Alfred Tennyson, and Lord Salisbury, and Angelina Claude peered saucily over her pince-nez at Mr. Plimsoll. In the 'eighties we had Connie Gilchrist, Mimi St. Cyr, and pretty Mabel Love. Mrs. John Wood smiled at Dr. Colenso, and Letty Lind looked archly at Sir Henry Thompson, the famous surgeon. And Kitty Munroe and Clara Graham beamed on you, with Huxley, Tyndall, and Darwin as the serious relief. And there was always dainty Dorothy Deane, whose beauty before she was an actress was made famous by Sir Frederick Leighton, P.R.A.

I can remember the time—it was in the 'sixties—when the features and forms of the belles of burlesque were pictures in the corner of pocket-handkerchiefs.

I have a handkerchief—it is very worn and thin now—adorned with the shapely form and fair features of Pauline Markham, one of the loveliest girls the English stage has ever known, and I bought that handkerchief in 1868 at a well-known hosier's in the Poultry.

The handkerchief photograph was in evidence, if I remember rightly, soon after Pauline Markham had made a success at the Queen's Theatre in Long Acre in an extravaganza by W. S. Gilbert, *La Vivandière* ; or, *True to the Corps*.

What a cast it was ! Johnny Toole, Lal Brough, Henrietta Hodson, Fanny Addison, and pretty Pauline of the picture pocket-handkerchief.

Charming Henrietta Hodson, as every one knows, became Mrs. Henry Labouchere, a delightful hostess and the mother of a marchioness.

Henrietta Hodson's grandfather was the proprietor of the old Bower Saloon in Stangate, Lower Marsh, Lambeth. He was an Irish actor and vocalist, a clever musician, and the composer of "Tell me, Mary, how to woo thee."

It was at the old "Sour Balloon"—that was its pet name with its patrons—that James Fernandez and the great Robson made their first appearance, and in the 'sixties I was more than once a Sour Ballooner.

Pretty Fanny Josephs—and how pretty she was!—was what the photographic trade would call a "quick seller" in

the 'seventies. She began seriously at Sadler's Wells in the 'sixties and then went straight to the Strand, where she at once became one of the most popular belles of burlesque.

When the Holborn opened with Boucicault's famous *Flying Scud* she played Lord Woodbie, and that was a part in which she was long remembered. It was in the *Flying Scud* that George Belmore gave his memorable performance of Nat Gosling.

Two years later Fanny Josephs was the manageress of the Holborn, and opened with H. T. Craven's *Post Boy* and a burlesque by Burnand.

She went to the Globe with Harry Montague, and played in Byron's *Partners for Life*, but the happiest memory I have of her goes back to the evening in September 1873 when *School* was revived by the Bancrofts at the Prince of Wales's, and Fanny Josephs won all our hearts as Bella.

Old playgoers remember how charming she was in *The Pink Dominoes*. She played the part during the whole of the long run.

Fanny Josephs made a delightful photograph, and there was always a big sale for her, especially in her burlesque days.

There is another photograph which was a popular exhibit. It was a photograph of Mrs. Stirling and her daughter Fanny, and the daughter's face was shown in an oval frame by her mother's side. I have an idea that the photograph was called "Masks and Faces," but I am not sure. I only know that it was one of the popular features in the shop windows in those far-off days.

I have many happy memories of that fine old actress Mrs. Stirling, who became in private life Lady Gregory, but the abiding one is her Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*.

And there is another dear old lady—Mrs. Keeley. Mrs. Keeley had practically quitted the stage when I was a boy, but I saw her on many occasions when she played for charitable purposes and benefits, and I knew her in her extreme old age.

When she was well over ninety she sent me her photograph signed "Mary Anne Keeley," and with it a charming letter, and the letter was so light-hearted and merry it might have



J. L. TOOLE AND PAUL BEDFORD



been written by a girl of nineteen instead of a woman of ninety-one.

To-day we have the actor-manager very much to the front in theatrical matters, and frequently the features of the actor-manager are made familiar to all the world by the art of the photographer. But in the old days a good many managers, some of them important managers, did not seek that form of publicity.

E. T. Smith was not a photographic celebrity, nor, coming to a later day, did the brothers Gatti adorn any other gallery than the Royal Adelaide, and there were other managers with whose features the shop-window-gazing crowd were never made familiar.

Some theatrical managers are born and some are made, and others are neither born nor made—they just happen.

One of the most interesting amateur managers I knew personally was the late Mr. W. H. C. Nation. He began to take theatres and produce plays which were sprinkled all over with songs by himself in the days of my youth, and he was taking theatres for the same purpose until quite recently. In his time he took for periods Sadler's Wells, Astley's, the old Holborn, the Charing Cross, and Terry's.

The Royalty was his favourite theatre for a time, but his last venture was at the Scala.

The bill of the play during a Nation season was a curiosity. The name of the play and the cast occupied a very small portion of it. The rest of the bill was taken up with large cross-lines giving the names of the "Songs by W. H. C. Nation" introduced into the piece, and after each song mentioned on the programme the name of W. H. C. Nation was printed in large type.

The Nation productions were not lavish. The scenery was simple and the dresses would not have been censored by a committee of economy even in wartime.

It was believed at one time that Mr. Nation was in the law and that he allotted so much money to his theatrical ventures and then retired to make more at his legitimate business. But after his death it was discovered that he was an independent gentleman of very considerable wealth.

There was never much of an audience, but that did not

matter. Mr. Nation's happiness consisted in witnessing his own plays and listening to his own songs.

I have seen him sitting in a private box, almost the only person in the front of the house, and when one of his own songs had been sung he would bang the floor of the box with his umbrella and shout "Encore! Encore!"

Mr. Nation, who was educated at Eton and Oxford, was an amiable and charming old gentleman, but the desire to see his name and his songs starred on the playbill of a West End house was his ruling passion. And in the course of his long and estimable career he must have paid a pretty considerable sum for the privilege.

The true romance of Mr. W. H. C. Nation's life was only discovered some little time after his death. He had acquired and furnished in his younger days a mansion in the West End for the reception of his bride. But on the eve of the wedding day the lady exercised the privilege of her sex and changed her mind. The house was never occupied by the disconsolate lover. He only occasionally paid it a brief visit and left everything untouched. When the house after his death had to be sold the romantic incident became known to the Press and the love story of Mr. W. H. C. Nation was the romantic relief to the stern realities of the Battle of the Somme.

An amateur manager of a very different kind to Mr. W. H. C. Nation was the late Mr. H. J. Leslie.

Leslie was an accountant. He was not only a clever accountant but a skilful musician. He began his theatrical career when he was called in professionally to straighten up matters at the Gaiety when John Hollingshead went out and George Edwardes, having found backers, took upon himself the sole charge of the Sacred Lamp.

In September 1886 George Edwardes produced *Dorothy*. Now *Dorothy* was not, for some reason, a success at the Gaiety, and George Edwardes decided to give it up. Mr. Leslie believed in the piece, acquired the rights, and in December 1886 transferred it to the Prince of Wales's, where the comic opera caught on at once, became a huge success, and Leslie made a very large sum of money.

Then he went into other speculations which were not so

successful, and finally he came to grief over the most extravagantly expensive pantomime that has ever been produced on the English stage.

Cinderella was written by my confrères, Richard Henry, whose full names were and still are Richard Butler and Henry Chance Newton.

Minnie Palmer, of *My Sweetheart* and *Yours Merrily*, John R. Rogers, fame, was engaged to play Cinderella.

Minnie Palmer was a pretty little actress and vocalist who came from America, tremendously boomed beforehand by her husband, an expert in publicity, and in 1883 she played Tina in *My Sweetheart* at the Strand Theatre, and became the talk of the town.

There was another pretty and clever New York actress at the time, and the two ladies were supposed to be great rivals professionally.

When Minnie Palmer's forthcoming appearance in London was being boomed Harry Jackson, who was an excellent low comedian famous for his stage Jews, said to me, "Wait till you see Lotta. I'm getting her over for a London season."

Harry Jackson secured the Opera Comique for Lotta. She appeared as Musette. The play was a failure, and there was considerable clamour in the house, which was declared afterwards to be due to organized opposition.

Early in January 1884 Lotta changed the bill and appeared in a version of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, specially prepared for her by Charles Dickens, junior. In this she played Little Nell and the Marchioness, and with Frank Wyatt as Dick Swiveller she made an enormous success.

I have always remembered Lotta's first night at the Opera Comique from the fact that there were a number of police present, distributed in various parts of the house, ready to seize upon the first objector, conscientious or otherwise.

But to return to *Cinderella*. The cast was a remarkable one. Charles Coborn and John Le Hay were the Sisters; Violet Cameron was engaged for the Prince, but had the influenza; Fawdon Vokes was a Kangaroo, Harry Parker was the Baron, and the villain of the plot was represented by Shiel Barry.

There was a Shakespearean procession, there was a dazzling

ballroom scene, a marvellous transformation scene, and a grand international ballet of insects.

There were lyrics by Clement Scott and music by Ivan Caryll, H. J. Leslie, Bob Martin, and Alfred Cellier, and the production was in the hands of Mr. Charles Harris.

Never had Charlie Harris had such an opportunity of presenting a production to playgoers more calculated to perform the operation which he realistically described as "taking their eyeballs out."

Her Majesty's Theatre was secured for the production—it had previously been the scene of a Haverley minstrel entertainment and of a Hawtrey season, with the ballet of *Excelsior*—and Her Majesty's own *Cinderella* was presented to the British public on Boxing Night, 1889. It was the last production in the old house before it was taken down and rebuilt by Beerbohm Tree.

Charlie Harris had a habit in conversation of ending his sentences with "Follow me?"

A few days before the production of *Cinderella* I met "the Stage Damager," as the *Sporting Times* pleasantly dubbed him, in the Haymarket. He was taking a little light refreshment at Epitau's, which was then being run by my old friend, Mr. G. Pentecost, a director of the Alhambra and a grandson of Pierce Egan.

"So you're going to take their eyeballs out again, Charlie, are you?" I said. And this was the reply, "I'm going to do more than that. Follow me? I'm going to take my brother Gus's eyeballs out too. Follow me?"

Mr. H. J. Leslie was very largely concerned with the production of *Cinderella*. All that he had left after several disastrous speculations was embarked in the enterprise.

'89 was the great influenza year, and gave us the phrase "the prevailing epidemic." Several of the principals were down early with influenza, but Minnie Palmer threw up her part and explained to the Press that the reason she did so was that she had not received her salary.

Within a few days the receivers were in the theatre, and in a fortnight the curtain fell for the last time, and poor Jack Leslie, a generous, kind-hearted man of considerable artistic ability, who had listened like W. H. C. Nation to his own

songs produced at his own expense—he had written the music for several of the numbers in *Cinderella*—was a ruined man.

He went soon afterwards to New York, and there another great misfortune overtook him. He had a serious illness and became blind, but recovered his sight and returned to England, and not very long afterwards he died.

The story of H. J. Leslie, accountant, amateur composer, theatrical manager, and the most generous of men, is one of the tragedies of Theatreland.

But the whole story cannot be told. It might do justice to the memory of the dead, but it would wound the feelings of the living.

CHAPTER XXXVII

IN my youth and young¹ manhood there was a very considerable portion of the public who would not enter a theatre. The old prejudice against it still survived, and was by no means confined to the Nonconformist Conscience. And so there was always a plentiful supply of entertainment arranged in such a way as to ease the scruples of the conscientious objector.

The Howard Pauls, at St. Martin's Hall and elsewhere, and the German Reeds—Mrs. German Reed was Priscilla Horton, who had a remarkable and brilliant career on the stage before she took to the entertainment business—were popular features of the London amusement world in the 'sixties and 'seventies. First at the Royal Gallery of Illustration, which was afterwards the Raleigh Club, then at the Polygraphic Hall, afterwards Toole's Theatre, and later at St. George's Hall, under the management of Walter Reed and Corney Grain, they gave more or less theatrical performances, but they were not given in a theatre, and so conscientious objectors in need of amusement flocked to them.

It was this class of entertainment that gave us John Parry and Corney Grain, with George Grossmith following in his footsteps. Arthur Cecil, Arthur Law, and Fanny Holland appeared with the German Reeds in the 'seventies, and sketches and entertainments were written for them by dramatists like W. S. Gilbert and Frank Burnand.

It was the building that was everything in those days. To enter a theatre to see Arthur Cecil in a Gilbert play would have been wicked. To see Arthur Cecil in a Gilbert sketch at St. George's Hall was an innocent delight.

The Christy Minstrels—I have vague memories of the Matthews Brothers, who were, I think, connected with the C.C.C., or Christy's Coloured Comedians—became eventually the Moore and Burgess Minstrels, and the Moore and Burgess

Minstrels were carried on under the auspices of Mr. George Washington Moore, professionally known as "Pony" Moore, who was a member of the company originally established in London in 1857 by Messrs. Raynor and Pierce.

Moore was an eccentric character, more eccentric off the stage perhaps than on it. He had a habit of letting the action suit the word, and once when being entertained at the Mansion House with other members of the profession he so far remembered himself as the proprietor of a nigger troupe as to give a waiter a black eye, and for this he was summoned to appear at a little establishment immediately below the Mansion House.

Moore imported a good many comic songs from America, but in the Christy Minstrels days the songs were written and composed by well-known authors and musicians. Among the lyrists were Henry S. Leigh, Frank Stainforth, Alfred Crowquill, Nelson Lee, jun., Howard Paul, and Fred McCabe, and Meyer Lutz was the principal composer.

I got one of my first guineas for writing a song for the minstrels soon after they had dropped the Christy and become the Moore and Burgesses.

The minstrel entertainments drew crowded houses, and were largely patronized by provincials visiting the metropolis, for the proud motto of these minstrels was, "We never perform out of London."

Early in 1870 the Mohawk Minstrels established themselves at the Agricultural Hall in Merry Islington, and were very successful. They called themselves "A new era in Minstrelsy."

The Moore and Burgesses were not very friendly to the Mohawks, and the Mohawks, in one of their announcements, said that they "utterly ignored the inflated, highfalutin style of advertising affected by some, and were contented to mind their own business."

I have mentioned that some of the songs of the Christy Minstrels were supplied by Frederick McCabe. He was an author, an actor, and a composer. He wrote his own entertainments and composed his own music, and was a one-man show. His *Begone, Dull Care, or Physio-Photorama of Dramatic Illusions*, was one of the attractions of London.

McCabe was a clever ventriloquist. I remember his per-

formance of two characters at once, male and female, in which he was dressed half on one side as a man and half on the other side as a woman and spoke alternately in a male and female voice.

Then we had W. S. Woodin with his *Carpet Bag and Sketch Book*, and his *Olio of Oddities* was able to fill the Egyptian Hall "every day at eight, except Saturday, and Saturday at three."

An entertainer who was a good patterer as well as a good showman was always sure of big houses in the old days. Albert Smith's *Mont Blanc* was as popular as anything in London, and Artemus Ward, the Genial Showman, would have made a fortune but for the illness which struck him down almost at the commencement of his London experience.

Mr. J. N. Maskelyne, once with Cooke, and afterwards for some years in partnership with Mr. David Devant, was then—as he is to-day—a master entertainer in his special line of business, and no one will forget the tremendous success of his exposure of the Davenport Brothers' trick and the mysteries of so-called Spiritualism.

The home of Maskelyne, Magic, and Mystery was in those days the Egyptian Hall.

Then we had Dr. Lynn with his *That's how it's done*. Dr. Lynn's was quite a fashionable entertainment. He gave his show twice daily in the Egyptian Large Hall, and he quoted the testimony of Victor Hugo that "Dr. Lynn's séances are perfectly astounding and his mysteries of all nations are inexplicable and demand the attention of Science."

Lynn described himself as "The Wonder-Worker of India, China, and Japan," and after exposing the great secrets of the age of Egyptian magicians and the startling wonders of the modern Spiritualists, he generally wound up with "*And that's how it's done*," which in time became quite a Cockney catch phrase.

Verbeck had a great vogue at one time in conjunction with a very charming clairvoyante who was called Mademoiselle Marguerite, but he suddenly disappeared from London and no one seems to know what became of him.

Verbeck made his first appearance at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, in 1885. He was not a master of English, and his

assistant and interpreter was named Guibal, a Frenchman who took part in the French war of 1870 as a lieutenant of Chasseurs, was taken prisoner but escaped before the investment of Paris, went to Ireland and was there engaged as a teacher of languages in Dublin. He then came to London and was the correspondent of the Paris *Gaulois* and *Le Temps*. He was a member of the Savage Club and the Press Club.

It was about 1886 that he joined Verbeck as an interpreter, then he travelled the country on his own, and afterwards went to Mexico with his clairvoyante, and there he was said to have met his death in dramatic circumstances.

The entertainment of my aimable double, Mr. Charles Bertram, who had a charming assistant in Mademoiselle Patrice, is within everybody's memory.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

IF the gentleman who said, "Give me the making of a nation's ballads and I care not who makes its laws," had a solid foundation for his remark, then the history of the music-hall is an important part of the history of England.

But although a ballad originally meant a song with dance—the words "ballad" and "ballet" have the same derivation—it is probable that the ballads the gentleman referred to were more in the nature of those written for recitation.

For all that the evolution of the music-hall is a contribution, and by no means an unimportant contribution, to the history of the manners and customs of the English people of the nineteenth century.

When I first began to take an intelligent interest in the ways of the world around me there were plenty of pleasure gardens dotted around London which provided a programme of entertainment for the rambling crowd.

Many of the licensed houses in various parts of the metropolis had tea-gardens attached to them, and for the entertainment of visitors comic and sentimental singers were engaged. This phase of London's popular amusement gave us the expression "a tea-garden performance," which still survives. But I lived to see many of the tea-garden performers blossom into West End favourites, and one or two of them into West End managers.

Then we had the song and supper saloons, of which Evans's was the most classy representative, and Evans's and Paddy Green and Charles Sloman and Herr Jonghmans are among my memories of the past.

There you could see many a man of light and leading enjoying his ease with conviviality, and listening to a selection of madrigals, glees, choruses, and songs, with an intimation on the programme that "Gentlemen are respectfully re-

quested to encourage the Vocalists by attention, the Café part of the Rooms being intended for Conversational Parties."

* * * * *

The Coal Hole and the Cider Cellars are names of imperishable memory, because they are landmarks in the story of the night life of London when night was apparently given up to drinking and rowdyism, and a rollicking and full-flavoured conviviality that the present generation would consider outrageous.

The early music-halls were more or less public-house extensions, and the amount of drink absorbed during the progress of the entertainment was the most important part of the programme from the proprietor's point of view.

In all parts of the house busy waiters bustled about among the audience, and "Any orders, gents?" was their constant cry.

There were bars wherever it was possible to place one, and these bars were the regular rendezvous of "sports" young and old, betting men and members of the flash fraternity.

Space in some of the larger houses was sacrificed to tables for the accommodation of drinkers because there was more room for bottles and glasses on the tables than on the narrow ledges in front of the seats.

It was liquor in front of the house and licence on the stage. Lion comiques scored some of their greatest successes in the impersonation of dissipated "swells" who were always on the drunken racket. The red-nosed comedian's favourite topic was drink, and the only domestic touch in his songs had reference as a rule to the lodger.

I remember that my old friend and colleague, the late Dutton Cook of the *World* and the *Pall Mall*, writing as late as the early 'eighties, said, "In lieu of the old tea-gardens, often harmless enough, and even wholesome, there flourish and flash and flare nowadays the gorgeous gin-palaces, wherein the visitor must drink deep and often—he can stay upon no other terms—or the malodorous music-halls, with their unseemly dances and gross songs."

But the father of the modern music-hall, Charles Morton, lived to see the Augean stables cleansed, and passed away full of years, the honoured head of the Palace Theatre,

with no promenade, no drinking in the auditorium, and on the stage a refined entertainment to which a matinée girl could take her mother or even her spinster aunt in perfect confidence to see an entertainment in which no word was heard and no action seen to which modesty and refinement could take exception.

But my memories are not all of the evil side of the early halls. There are others.

* * * * *

One of my earliest recollections is of Stead, "The Perfect Cure," which was the one song of his life.

He first appeared in it at Weston's Music Hall. There was nothing in the song. It was really idiotic, but it was sung to a jumping dance in the style of Jump, Jim Crow, and it was the dance, not the song, that caught on. Everybody tried to do that dance. You saw it done in the drawing-room. You saw it done in the street. The dance captured and conquered the town.

Stead was the music-hall sensation of the day, but when "The Cure" died out, he died out with it. He was never a success in anything else.

I think of the music-halls of my youth and many a phantom rises from the grave of the buried years.

Mackney, the forerunner and prototype of the negro minstrel, was singing his songs in the year that I was born, and when I was a schoolboy we were all singing his songs. "In the Strand" was one of them.

*For the last few weeks I've been a-dodging
A girl I know that's got a lodging
In the Strand.
The first thing that put my heart in a flutter
Was her Balmoral boot, as she crossed the gutter
In the Strand.*

*I wish I was with Nancy,
In a second floor for ever more,
I'd live and die with Nancy
In the Strand, in the Strand, in the Strand.*

But I saw and chatted with Mackney over old music-hall days when I was a middle-aged man.

Unsworth, with his topical stump oration and his umbrella banged on the table, "Am I right, or any other man?"

Harry Clifton and his "moral" songs, "Paddle your own Canoe," "Pulling Hard against the Stream," "Work, Boys, Work, and be contented," and his rattling comic songs, "The Calico Printer's Clerk" and "Polly Perkins of Paddington Green."

Henri Clark, "The artistic comique," late of Miss Louisa Pyne's Company. I remember him at the old South London in his "Round the World in Thirty Minutes," and later when Mr. and Mrs. Henri Clark toured with their own entertainment and *The World we live in*, written and composed by my old friend G. W. Hunt, of "By Jingo" fame.

G. W. Hunt's son was, as I have previously said, an artist in my father's office when I was in the City, and I used to see a great deal of the elder Hunt and hear much about Macdermott long before I knew the great man personally.

Macdermott had been an actor at the Grecian, and was a great friend of Henry Pettitt, and Henry Pettitt wrote a song for him called "The Scamp," which was the foundation of Macdermott's fame, but it was in G. W. Hunt's "We don't want to fight, but, by jingo, if we do!" that the lion comique roared himself into song celebrity. The song made an enormous sensation, and it is worth noting now that it was reprinted as a special supplement with the music by the *Paris Figaro*.

I knew another of the lions, the Great Vance, with his "Slap! Bang! Here we are again!" and "I'm a Chickaleery bloke with my one, two, three."

I remember when Mr. Alfred G. Vance went on tour with his own company and the following announcement: "Patrons, H.R.H. the Prince of Wales and the Aristocracy and Clergy of Great Britain and Ireland."

George Leybourne with his "Captain Cuff," "The Rollicking Rams," "Mouse Traps," "Up in a Balloon, Boys!" and his "Champagne Charley" that went all over the world. I saw Leybourne—he was a mechanic from the Midlands, his real name was Saunders—drive away from the Canterbury in the carriage and four that Bill Holland had presented to him as a "moving picture" advertisement.

And "Jolly" John Nash! Nash was famous for his laughing songs. I remember I wrote two for him and he never sang either of them, but he was always a tonic, and on or off the stage had an unfailing flow of old-fashioned beefsteaky bonhomie.

Fred Albert, who used to improvise on the stage, W. B. Fair with his "Tommy, make room for your Uncle!" Fred Coyne, Sam Torr, James Fawn, and later Charles Godfrey!

Godfrey delighted in the dramatic song. The song he liked best himself was "On the Bridge at Midnight."

Godfrey was another of the music-hall stars who used to confide in me. He was fond of driving about the country, and so was I, and once we met when we were both driving from Birmingham to London. I pulled up at an hotel at Stony Stratford of *non sequitur* fame, and found Godfrey there.

I met him in his phaeton almost as frequently as I used to meet another music-hall celebrity—but he was a manager—Mr. Sam Adams. I don't think I ever saw Sam Adams off the box seat of his phaeton, and for several years I used to meet him every afternoon, driving in the Park.

Artistic Albert Chevalier, still happily delighting us, brought a new touch of what might be called "The Royal Gallery of Illustration" into the variety hall song.

Jenny Hill, "The Vital Spark," Bessie Bellwood, Bessie Bonehill, Kate Carney, Lottie Collins, Harriet Vernon, Julia Mackay, the Sisters Leamar, and the Sisters Levey. The names of the fair stars that shine again in memory's sky are legion. Only a Prize Cake Competition such as my old friend Mr. Frank Boyd is so fond of offering in *The Pelican* could decide which is the memory prize among the fair visions of the past.

The veteran Charles Coborn is still with us, and his "Man who broke the Bank at Monte Carlo" and "Two Lovely Black Eyes"—the song that drew all London to the Trocadero—are classics.

In the days before the sketches the choice of varieties was limited to singing and dancing, the feats of acrobats and the performances of trained animals, and so the songs of the star singer were the booms on which the halls relied.

These songs when they caught on were sung or hummed or whistled by all classes of society, and for this reason. In spite of the hostility of the theatres in the ante-sketch days, the popular music-hall songs were parodied in every burlesque and extravaganza produced by theatrical managers.

Gilbert, Byron, and Burnand parodied the music-hall songs of the day in all their earlier burlesques.

Mr. C. H. Hibbert has lately given us the story of the music-hall, and told us how it has progressed from pot-house to palace. I knew it in its pot-house days, and I have lived to see the local free-and-easy become the local Empire, and Art a welcome guest in the halls that were once given over to vulgarity and double meaning.

Hardly a red nose now remains on the music-hall stage, the lodger has gone to fight for his country, and the bibulous bounder who delighted to call himself a rollicking ram has become an anachronism. He has been wiped out of existence by the Board of Control.

CHAPTER XXXIX

WHEN Charles I addressed the crowd from the scaffold he called himself the Martyr of the People. He maintained that because he represented law and order he had been doomed to suffer.

In the London that I remember, a London that I knew by day and knew by night, the police were the martyrs of the people, or rather of a portion of the people, and with very few sections of the people in the mid-Victorian days were the police so popular as they are to-day.

The rough element of London was at its roughest in the 'sixties and the early 'seventies, and the London crowd that assembled on the slightest provocation was invariably hostile to the man in blue.

To assault and maltreat a policeman was the hooligan's joy. To bonnet a policeman was one of the favourite forms of amusement of the "swells" who turned night into day in certain quarters of the West End.

The general public was far more resentful of police interference than it is now. The appearance of a policeman at a place of public resort was as a red rag to a bull.

I remember the London police with their high hats, their swallow-tailed coats, and their rattles, and I remember the first appearance of the helmet, suggested, if I remember rightly, by the Prince Consort.

In the days of my youth the entire police force of England and Wales was less by several thousands of men than the Metropolitan Police Force of to-day. The small number of policemen in London was quite inadequate to its needs. As late as the year 1869 there were only fifteen detectives in the Metropolitan Police Force, and it was not until 1884 that the police were supplied with whistles.

It is not to be wondered at in these circumstances that

during the 'sixties and 'seventies crime had increased to a very considerable extent, and apprehensions for crime had similarly diminished.

In the rough quarters and the criminal areas the wise policeman—wise from the personal point of view—avoided whenever possible a physical encounter with members of the criminal mob.

There were alleys and back-ways down which the police never ventured except in twos and threes.

Until the coming of the electric light the main thoroughfares after the shops were closed were after nightfall little better than black patches, and they were the haunts of evil characters, male and female, who plied their trade almost with impunity.

The burglar flourished and his deeds were as daring as those of the old highwayman, and at one time the garrotter was the terror of wayfarers. To be garrotted was about as ordinary an event in the life of a Londoner as it was to have the influenza.

Respectable middle-aged and elderly men who spent the evening out and had to return late to their suburban homes frequently carried a life-preserver. The life-preserver was as much in evidence in certain shop windows as the anti-gas mask was a year ago.

The burglars and the footpads of the 'sixties were generally armed, but the revolver was not then the favourite weapon of criminal violence.

With the criminal areas of the 'seventies and 'eighties I had a close acquaintance, rendered necessary by my journalistic duties, and I had the doubtful honour of the personal acquaintance, not only of many notorious malefactors, but of the captains of hooligan gangs. I was on nodding terms with many of the inhabitants of the most larcenously-inclined districts of the metropolis, and permitted to see them occasionally in their home life.

It was an interesting experience, though not an exhilarating one. It had no evil effect upon me, and only one consequence that I regret. There are a number of habitual criminals who occasionally relieve the monotony of their imprisonment by writing me long letters from the convict gaol in which they

happen to find themselves. I have at times been rather uneasy in my mind as to the view the governors of His Majesty's prisons may take of the matter.

I am not dealing here with the upper crust of criminal society. The high mob does not dwell with the low mob in the poverty areas and the black patches. The great captains of modern crime have their luxurious flats in the West End, their country houses, their motor-cars, and their "establishments."

I knew one who had his own yacht, and it was on that yacht that he conveyed the stolen *Duchess of Devonshire* to America.

The people whose acquaintance I made in the criminal areas were the criminals born on criminal soil and reared from criminal stock, and their homes were of the poorest and wretchedest description.

The only criminal homes in which I have seen signs of prosperity are the homes of the receivers. In many of these there are not only signs of well-to-do-ness, but even of prosperity.

I have said that my long acquaintance with the criminal class was not to my disadvantage. In one way it was to my good. It brought me into close touch with the police and with the heads of police in every district in London.

It was because of the knowledge I possessed that some years ago Mr. John M. Le Sage asked me on behalf of the editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, the then Hon. Harry Lawson, to investigate the charges which had been brought against the London police in connexion with the notorious D'Angeley case.

The arrest of Madame D'Angeley in Regent Street on one memorable night in 1909 led to an anti-police agitation which spread into the Press, took the town by storm, was the subject of heated discussion in the House of Commons, and eventually led to a Royal Commission.

It was in connexion with this investigation that for many weeks I walked about London in every direction through the long night and often far into the dawn, and was able to publish facts with regard to the infamous White Slave traffic that was being carried on by foreigners—principally Germans

in almost every quarter of London. And they were facts which completely exonerated the police from the charges brought against them by people utterly ignorant of the gigantic and far-reaching conspiracy of vice with which the police had to deal.

The results of the commission I undertook at the instance of the *Daily Telegraph* are republished in two volumes, "London by Night" and "Watches of the Night," and my reminiscences of that interesting journalistic experience may be left where students of the seamy side of London life may find them if they wish to.

The journalistic campaigns of which I am proudest are those I have been permitted to undertake on behalf of the children and the youth of the vast and mighty city in which I was born.

In my investigations into the conditions of child life in the poverty areas and the perils to youth in the black patches and the criminal areas I always received the generous assistance of my friends the officers and officials of the Metropolitan Police. How keenly interested in the welfare of the people, of whose lives they see so much, many of the police—from the superintendent to the ordinary constable—are, only the civilians who have been privileged to work side by side with them can form any idea.

Only once in forty years have the friendly relations between myself and the guardians of law and order been interrupted, and that was when I took up and fought out in the *Daily Mail* the case of the unfortunate Adolf Beck, the case to which we owe the Court of Criminal Appeal. For a little time, but only for a little time, Scotland Yard ceased to smile upon me. Certain statements that I made were regarded as reflecting upon the Yard methods.

But when I had proved my case beyond the shadow of doubt the hatchet was buried, the pipe of peace was smoked, and we once more "spoke as we passed by."

When I was writing "The Cry of the Children" I received the greatest assistance from the police, who were as keenly interested as I was in a campaign that had for its object the safeguarding of infant life. I have been writing on this subject for over thirty years, and I have lived to

see it recognized as one of the most vital questions of the day.

To-morrow will be the day of the child. To-day is the day of the young man. But long ago far-seeing men saw the urgent necessity from every point of view, moral, physical, and patriotic, of teaching the lads of London to make better use of the strength and vigour of youth.

In every district of London where hooliganism was flourishing I have seen the wonderful work accomplished by clergymen and philanthropists who believed in muscular Christianity.

The Board School and the Council School had helped to keep the wretched little "London Arabs" off the streets, but the decay of apprenticeship left thousands of lads when they had passed the school age with nothing before them but "blind alley" occupations.

There were small armies of lads in certain London districts who after nightfall were the terror of peaceful citizens. Some of them formed themselves into organized gangs and relieved the high spirits and energy of youth by acts of more or less criminal violence. Some of these gangs of boy bandits carried sandbags as weapons of attack on unfortunate passers-by, and the captains of some of the gangs carried revolvers.

It was the Rev. Claude Eliot, of Hoxton, who first brought me into touch with the movement for the establishment of miniature rifle ranges in connexion with well-managed and well-regulated boys' clubs, and I was able to watch the marvellous change which this patriotic priest of God wrought among the roughest elements in one of the roughest districts of London.

It was a movement with which the late Prince Francis of Teck had the deepest sympathy. Claude Eliot was stricken down in the midst of his noble work, and some time afterwards I received the following letter from Prince Francis :

"DEAR MR. SIMS,—I am having my annual display of the New North Road Club for Lads, or rather the Claude Eliot Memorial Club for Lads, on Thursday, 23rd. If you have nothing better to do, would you do me the pleasure of dining at 7.30 at the Marlborough Club and I will drive you down? Claude Hay is coming too, and that, coupled with the fact

that I have just read your kind article in the *Referee*, emboldens me to ask you, as I know how deep is the interest that you take in all these institutions. “Yours sincerely,

“FRANCIS OF TECK.”

Queen Mary's brother continued his interest in the Lads' Rifle Club movement until he, too, alas, was removed in the full tide of his young, busy, and patriotically useful life.

It was in connexion with another phase of a journalist's life in London that I received the following interesting letter from the Rev. Father Adderley :

“DEAR SIR,—Thank you very much for so kindly sending me the books. It brings back to my mind the early days of East End work when I was in Bethnal Green twenty years ago. I wish if you ever have time you would call at S. Francis House, 39 Albany Street, close by you. It is a house for working lads kept by some Sisters with whom I am connected. They would so like to see you, and your poems were so inspiring. Hoping very much to see you when you are in Birmingham,

“I am, yours very truly,

“JAMES ADDERLEY.”

The late William Stead was always my good friend, though we differed on many matters, and he was a frequent correspondent when I was engaged on any question in which he himself was interested.

From the many letters I received from him I select the following, but I may add that I did not put a strain upon my native modesty by appearing on the platform at the Queen's Hall and orating side by side with John Burns and Bernard Shaw.

“DEAR MR. SIMS,—As you address probably the largest congregation of any living man every Sunday, I make bold to ask you whether you could be induced to come and say a word at our conference at the Queen's Hall, for which I enclose

you circular and ticket. Mr. Bernard Shaw is to be one of the speakers, Mr. Burns and others.

“ I am, yours sincerely,

“ W. T. STEAD.”

I have quoted these letters as they bear upon incidents in my life which are among my pleasantest reminiscences—the campaigns and crusades for the national well-being in which in a modest way I have been privileged to play my part as a Pressman.

CHAPTER XL

As I linger for a brief space in the glamour of the old days of Fleet Street I am saddened by the thought of how few of my early contemporaries remain.

That Fleet Street veteran, Mr. Thomas Catling, is still happily with us, hale and hearty, and he was one of my early guides, philosophers, and friends.

At the celebration of Tom Catling's fifty years in Fleet Street a banquet was given in his honour by his brother Pressmen, and the late Lord Burnham, who presided, made a delightfully interesting speech, in which he referred to the many changes the half-century had seen in the newspaper Press.

The newspaper when I first became a Pressman had not discovered the modern art of "window dressing." Such headlines as were used were simple and unilluminative, and there were no cross-lines.

The daily paper always had three or four closely printed leading articles, and a mass of solidly set matter. The happenings which to-day are set out with all the pomp and circumstance of display were inserted in a solid lump with a plain one-line heading.

In order to know the result of a law case or a police case you had to read right through to the end of the report. The "picturesque intro." when it first made its appearance in the *Daily Telegraph* was a startling novelty, and when George Sala and Godfrey Turner and the "young lions" began to write in a lighter vein than the public had been accustomed to, the new Press language was called "Daily Telegraphese."

There was little or no advertising of a new paper in those days, so newspapers of some sorts and weekly periodicals of other sorts came out and went in again in shoals. It was

nothing for a paper then to have an existence of a few months and even of a few weeks.

This was especially the case with humorous and satirical periodicals, which were always being started to take "Mr. Punch's" number down. There was very little capital behind them, but they generally had a clever and enthusiastic staff of acknowledged humorists. The periodical of this class was in those days more of a Bohemian toss-up than a commercial speculation.

Some of these journals, though they were not long-lived, made their mark in newspaperland, and are still quoted. The *Tomahawk*, with the scathing cartoons of Matt Morgan, has never been forgotten. The daring of the *Tomahawk* caused its downfall. Nothing was sacred to it—not even the Throne.

James Mortimer's *Figaro*, and Stephen Fiske's *Hornet*, the *Bat*, the *Hawk*, and the *Dwarf*; Byron's *Comic News*, Sawyer's *Funny Folks*, Zangwill and *Ariel*, Charles Ross and *Judy*, all are Fleet Street memories.

My old friend and colleague, Mr. Horace Lennard, shares my memories of those days, and recently gave a list of the vapoury ventures with which Fleet Street was flooded in the free-and-easy days of newspaperdom.

I have known a paper started on £50 and "worked" by three men. One printed it, and the other two wrote it. I don't think there was even that amount of capital behind a humorous periodical that I contributed to in the 'seventies. It was called *Punch's Baby*, and the title was significant, for it never grew up. It added itself to the infantile mortality returns at the age of three weeks. I remember that I called the column that I started in it "Almonds and Raisins."

The daily newspaper of that period made up for its lack of variety by devoting an enormous amount of its space to reports of the Parliamentary debates, and the Parliamentary debates of those days were worthy of it.

The House of Commons was a house of orators. Gladstone and Disraeli and John Bright never took part in a debate but all the world was eager to read what they had said, and no one would miss a line of it. Lord Salisbury was "a great master of gibes and flouts and sneers," but his flouting and his sneering always made good newspaper copy.

I can remember when no professing Jew was permitted to take his place in the august assembly, and I can recall the excitement when Baron Lionel Rothschild, after being returned again and again and each time rejected by the House, was by the joint operation of an Act of Parliament and a resolution of the House of Commons permitted to take his seat and record his vote.

And then the time came when Charles Bradlaugh was returned to Parliament and ejected from the House because he was a Freethinker, and ejected with a sufficient amount of personal violence to damage the honourable gentleman's clothing considerably. But the junior member for Northampton triumphed in the end like Baron Rothschild, and now at St. Stephen's men of the Ancient Faith may sit side by side with men of no faith at all.

Even in the long Parliamentary debates in the old-fashioned newspaper that I remember there was nothing to guide your eye.

I remember a young American lady saying to me one day in the long ago, "I can't stand your newspapers! You have to read them right through before you know what they're about. Now in America we just pick up a newspaper, we look at the headlines, and we needn't read the rest if we don't want to."

Since those days the English Press has been Americanized, and in some respects—not all—to its great advantage. No London newspaper to-day disdains the revealing headline.

The paragraph in the 'sixties and 'seventies was not much indulged in. In the ordinary mid-Victorian newspaper the idea of the editor seemed to be to pack as much black print into his space as his space would hold.

When in 1877 the *Referee* was started and I wrote my entire contribution in a series of paragraphs with stars between them, I was seriously told by a well-known journalist that that sort of thing would never do. It didn't fill the space or give the public enough for their money.

But I am writing those paragraphs still.

* * * * *

With the close of the nineteenth century I may bring these reminiscences of London life to an end. With all that has

happened in the twentieth century the younger generation is as familiar as the older generation.

There are young men now in Fleet Street who in the years to come will tell the story of London life in the first half of the twentieth century. But they will have to deal with phases of London life that are largely shorn of the distinctive features that made the strength of their appeal to the old brigade.

With the passing of the old tavern life a great change has come over Fleet Street. The comradeship of the teacup and cigarette is not as the comradeship of the tankard and the pipe.

The old highway of Bohemia is no longer the gay haunt of cultured vagabondage.

In the bars of Fleet Street and the Strand you may search in vain for the merry little coterie every member of which had made or was making a name in journalism, in literature, in art, or in the drama.

In what tavern, coffee-room, or dining-saloon in Fleet Street will you see gathered together o' nights in their accustomed "boxes," with substantial English fare in front of them, journalists, dramatists, and artists of high renown? Where will you find a "song and supper room" with a dozen men famous as artists, as writers, as advocates, as scientists, eating their chops, smoking their pipes, drinking their hot grog at midnight, and listening to an entertainment in which no woman takes part, held in a popular establishment through the portals of which no petticoat is allowed to pass?

These were the days of the giants, and the giants did not mind stooping to take their pleasure in Bohemia. They gathered gaily around the flowing bowl, and often went home in a growler at three or four o'clock in the morning from the sing-song or the supper-rooms or the Bohemian club. And the cabby who knew his business was quite prepared to get off the box and see his distinguished fare safely up the steps—if there were any—to the front door.

The early and the mid-Victorian days were the days of Thackeray, of Dickens, of Tennyson, of Browning, of Landseer and Millais, of Watts—of the pre-Raphaelites, Holman Hunt, Burne-Jones and Rossetti—of Huxley and Tyndall, of Darwin

and Ruskin, and of a great and noble army of men, many of whom to-day are spoken of as "giants."

I do not—Heaven forbid!—suggest that all these gentlemen took the joy of life from the Rabelaisian point of view, but many of them loved the feast of friendship and sounded the note joyously in their work.

That was a phase of life in London in the 'sixties and 'seventies. The East End crowded the flaring gin-palaces, and the West End in less ostentatious establishments, and, with liquor of a better quality, drank copiously without fear and without reproach.

In the middle-class home of suburban respectability the nightcap was a matter of course. At ten o'clock the maid would enter with a tray on which were decanters of brandy and Irish whisky—Scotch had not then come into fashion—and of gin, or more frequently Hollands, and on the tray were sugar and lemon and a great silver-lidded jug of hot water. Cold spirits and aerated waters were a later sacrifice to the growing temperance of the age.

It was an age of good cheer, heavy eating, and heavy drinking, of high animal spirits and of rowdy revelry.

But it was an age that the innocent gaiety and pleasant freedom of our twentieth-century Sunday would have filled with horror. For children to play a game of ball in the back garden was a desecration of the Sabbath which would have caused the neighbours to ostracize the family.

Sunday golf, Sunday tennis, Sunday cricket! If the immediate ancestors of those of us who play these games on Sunday to-day could hear of our proceedings they would turn in their graves.

The first Sunday Concert ever held was given at the Royal Albert Hall in 1871, and was followed by a long and bitter contest with the Lord's Day Observance Society.

The Sabbatarian tradition survived in the spirit long after it had been destroyed in the letter. I remember when my friend Robert Newman first started the Sunday concerts at the Queen's Hall. The programme consisted of performances on the grand organ and a few vocal items, mostly of a sacred character, and on the programme you were "particularly requested not to applaud."

I strongly urged Mr. Newman to remove the prohibition, which seemed to be Pharisaical. After swallowing the camel of a Sunday concert, why gape at the gnat of signifying the pleasure it had given you? Mr. Newman agreed with me, and the prohibition was withdrawn. From that day the audience rapidly increased, and the Sunday afternoon concerts at the Queen's Hall became one of the Sunday delights of London.

The National Sunday League, with which I had the honour of being for many years associated, had done yeoman service for the cause long before the Queen's Hall and the Albert Hall gave Sunday afternoon entertainments.

At the time that the League, of which Mr. Henry Mills was the secretary and the backbone, was fighting for a free Sunday, the great Sunday attraction to Londoners was the Hall of Science, where we went to hear lectures, sometimes of a startling character, by Charles Bradlaugh, Annie Besant, and Dr. Aveling.

But the Sunday League fought steadfastly and gallantly, and it is largely due to the efforts of the League that the principal museums are now open to the public on the only day that a very considerable portion have the leisure to visit them. And now we have Sunday concerts given in every part of London, and we have Sunday picture shows, and, though they are still more or less private performances, Sunday plays. But I can remember a time when there was absolutely nothing in London open to the public but the public.

That is a phase of London life which the journalist who chronicles his experiences of the first half of the twentieth century will not have to deal with, for it is a phase that London will never see again.

CHAPTER XLI

MID-VICTORIAN journalism was like mid-Victorian furniture, solid and heavy. When it indulged in sentiment the sentiment was like the sentimental song of the period, simple.

The passionate note of our modern songs was a rarity. We loved "The Old Arm chair" and the idyllic home was "In my Cottage near a Wood," and we implored the woodman to spare the tree that had sheltered us in our childhood.

"Truth in Absence" was the lover's creed, "Ever of Thee" he was fondly dreaming, and the young man at the piano sang to his lady love, "Thou art my own, my guiding star." If he were separated from the fair one the burden of his lay was "Her bright smile haunts me still." Our dearest memory was that "We wandered by the sea-beat shore, and gathered shells in days of yore." And we were always asking Ben Bolt if he remembered sweet Alice.

The simple story songs of "Claribel" were in every drawing-room, and if we went into the garden on a summer night we gazed aloft and sang to the "Beautiful Star." We peered into the canary's cage and warbled "Sing, Birdie, sing." Every maid of London sang "Maid of Athens," and sometimes the gentle maiden turned from the canary and looked out at the passing regiment and murmured coyly, "The Captain with his whiskers took a sly glance at me."

Our novels were moral and generally plain, straightforward stories of true love that ended happily until Ouida came with Mars on the war-path of passion and Venus in various disguises, now in the drawing-room, now in the camp, and now among the roses of Provence. But Ouida was something of a shock in the middle-class homes that subscribed to the circulating libraries.

Poor Louise de la Ramée! I knew her in the days of her

pride and prosperity, and I had a pathetic little letter from an old friend who saw her in the last days, when she lay in pain and poverty, forgotten by the world that had once been at her feet.

There was plenty of strong dramatic situation, and plenty of clever character-drawing too, in the novels that were of such absorbing interest to us in the 'seventies. A great public waited eagerly for all the earlier novels of the long series that commenced with "Lady Audley's Secret" and ended only the other day when Miss Braddon laid aside for ever the pen that she had plied so pleasantly and so profitably for half a century.

I remember the distress in my boyhood's home when the periodical *Robin Goodfellow*, in which "Lady Audley's Secret" appeared, suddenly ceased publication before we had discovered what Lady Audley's secret was.

Then came Zola, and Zolaism spread, and the young writers of the world rushed into realism in all languages. But Zolaism was too strong for the English palate at first, and when one of the famous Vizetelly brothers published an English edition of one of the novels he was prosecuted and imprisoned. That was in the days before the decadents had flooded the land with the poisonous fruits of their philosophy.

There was much that was gross and vicious in the old days, but it was not daintily arrayed. The scarlet woman did not wear a halo out of doors and work slippers for curates at home. The vice and virtue of mid-Victorian days were marked in plain figures. The literature of Holywell Street had not overflowed into Bond Street. Virtue went smiling in the sunshine and vice flaunted in the gas-light, and they did not dress so very much alike that it was with difficulty you could tell one from the other.

The degenerates had not established a literature and drama of their own. Apollo did not sing his swan-song in a convict gaol.

But the changes that came in the later years of the century were not all for the worse. Women and children were emancipated from the thralldom that they had borne for centuries, a

thralldom which was looked upon as part of the constitution of the country.

The young woman of to-day, though she smokes cigarettes and talks slang, is far healthier in body and brain than were her sisters in the 'sixties. She has enlarged her outlook and her feet. She does not weep at your frown or have hysterics if you smile at another of her sex. She is useful not only in the home but out of it.

Even if she be a bachelor girl, she is better able to take care of herself than she was in the old days of the sheltered life, because she is allowed to know something of the world before she leaves the shelter of the parental wing. And in the great tragedy through which our country is passing the young woman has shown herself a valuable asset entirely apart from the kitchen and cradle aspect of the feminine question.

And the child has ceased to be regarded as a chattel. Its right to have at least the opportunity of a healthy and happy life has been recognized even by the law. The fight for the recognition of the rights of childhood was a long and fierce one. But the battle has been won, and the safeguarding of the future of England's children is to-day recognized by all classes of the community as a national duty, not only from the human, but from the patriotic point of view.

When my friend Mrs. E. M. Burgwin, until lately the Superintendent of Special Schools, first aroused my personal interest in the welfare of the children, she was the head mistress at the Orange Street School in the Mint.

In those days thousands of little children were sent to school in a starving condition. The State said that they must be educated, and if they did not attend the parents would be summoned and fined. But the State troubled itself only about the brain of the child, and gave no thought to its body.

To-day there is no child in the land who need go foodless to school and return foodless to a foodless home.

And the little children and the babies are no longer to be found in the crowded public-house all day long and far into the night. But in the old times I have seen scores of children, babies in arms, and little ones of the tenderest years, crushed

in among the crowd in the gin-palace and the beer-house at midnight. And I have seen babies in arms being fed with beer, and little girls of four sipping the gin from their mothers' glasses.

That, thank God, is a phase of London life which has disappeared for ever !

EPILOGUE

IN the dawn of the new century, so far as these rambling memories of the happy bygone years are concerned, I part with my readers. Many of my older readers may remember much that I have forgotten or that I have omitted to chronicle. To deal with even all the theatrical happenings of sixty years in the space at my disposal would have made my chronicle of old days a dictionary of dates rather than a story of the past.

If I have not touched life at all points in these memories of the last half of the nineteenth century I have touched it at all those points which appeal to me personally. I have confined myself to those points for the reason that these are the personal reminiscences of one who during those fifty years has been mainly occupied with the newspaper and the theatre.

And now, amid the strain and stress of the fierce and furious conflict in which all that we hold dearest is at stake, with our cities darkened in gloom unknown since the days of the swinging lamps, the lanterns, and the torches, with our newspapers shrinking gradually to the small sheets of centuries ago, with all the young manhood of the nation called to arms, and with women in the hour of their country's need performing tasks of which their late Victorian mothers never dreamt and from which their mid-Victorian grandmothers would have shrunk in hysterical dismay, the London of my youth seems to be divided from the London of to-day not by fifty years but by a whole century.

I wander Fleet Street by night, and it brings back no joyous memories of the 'seventies and the 'eighties. I strain my eyes in the darkness and wait expectantly for the passing shades of Dr. Johnson and Boswell and the Fleet Streeters of their day.

I find myself at night in the Strand and Leicester Square and Shaftesbury Avenue, where Theatreland has spread from its old boundaries, and I see in front of the Temples of Thespis only a ghostly blue light that suggests the entrance to a police station. There were no blazing electric lights in Theatreland fifty years ago, but the gas flared gaily above the portals of the playhouse, and a long line of opal-shaded lights made gay the passages that led you to the fairyland of make-believe.

The darkness of Theatreland to-day carries my memory back to one bygone light of the night and to one light alone. And that is the wretched sandwichman with a lighted candle under a cardboard hat who perambulated the streets about Leicester Square as an advertisement for the dreadful old "Judge and Jury" show whose ways were darkness.

Thirty years ago I remember a Regent Street that was as dark at night as Piccadilly Circus is now. But even before the coming of the arc lamp some of us had started "A League of Light," and asked the shopkeepers to keep their shops unshuttered and their lights going to make a brighter London by night, and many of the West End shopkeepers gladly fell in with the suggestion, as it enabled them to advertise their wares to the passing thousands who only came West after nightfall.

But in all the years that I remember the taverns and the gin-palaces and the bars and the saloons were aflame. And as the cry of the Londoner became that of the dying Goethe—"Light, more light!"—so did the lamps of the liquor trade become larger and the beaming of Electra's rays more blinding.

In the days of my youth the public-house was a beacon-light in the loneliest thoroughfare and on the darkest night. In the days of my more than maturity if I look for a public-house as a landmark during my night rambles I have to strike a match to see it, and when I see it it is closed "by legislature's harsh decree," although there may be yet two hours to midnight.

But I recall a time when there were plenty of bars and drinking saloons that were open till three or four o'clock in the morning, and some of the most notorious as the resort of evildoers and criminal roughs stood in the very shadow of the Houses of the Lawgivers.

And in the Houses of the Lawgivers, if there was no preaching of class hatred there was scant show of sympathy with the classes that were unrepresented. In the days of my youth there was far more pity expressed for the savage and the far-off heathen than for the downtrodden and the poor of our own land.

The man who dreamed of social reform and put his dream into words was a dangerous demagogue, and the prison was his proper place. And to prison I saw many a man sent for preaching that which to-day would be his passport to Parliament.

Those were the shadows that lay upon the London of the long ago. It was a drabber London, a smaller London, a more disorderly London, a less healthy London than the London that we have now.

But it was the London that I loved, the London hallowed by a hundred happy memories.

It is in a London lying under the stress and strain of Britain's war for her existence, in a London that at night is a city shrouded in the gloom of the grave, a London sheltering herself in that gloom from the hurtling bombs of death from the skies above, a London restrained in its liberties and its liquor as it has never been since it became a European capital, that these memories of the old days of peace and joy, of buoyant good humour and rollicking fun, of festivity by day and revelry by night, of old-time plays and old-time players, of dead and gone dancing gardens "with a thousand extra lights," of Halls of Harmony and Haunts of Discord, have been written day by day and mainly from memory.

Writing of the pleasures of the past, my thoughts have been taken for a time from the pain of the present.

If these rambling recollections of sixty years of a Londoner's life have rendered a similar service to my readers, they have at least been written to some good and useful purpose.

And so with a grateful heart for the golden days that were and a heart full of faith in the golden days to be, I cease to look back and fix my gaze fearlessly on the future.



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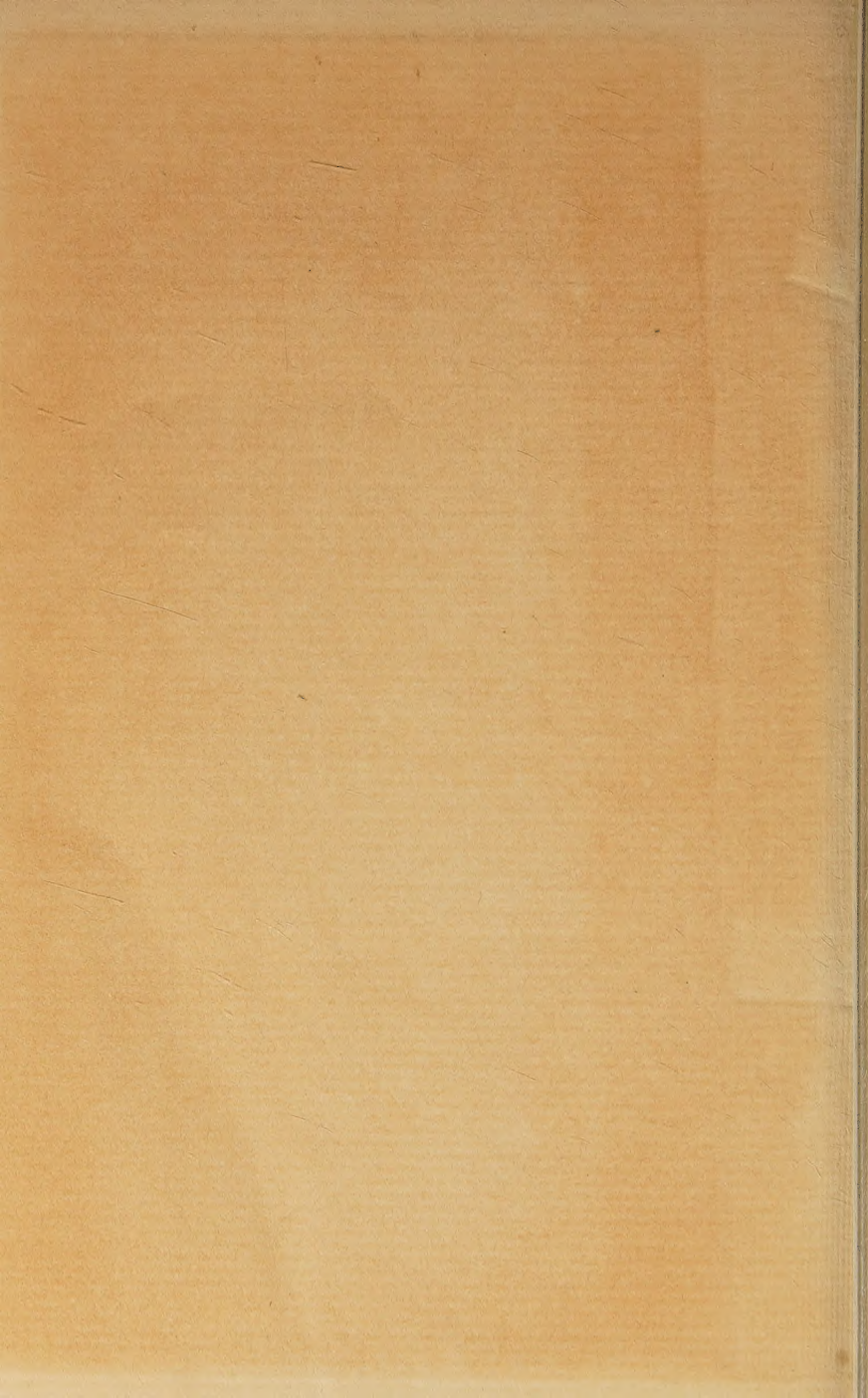
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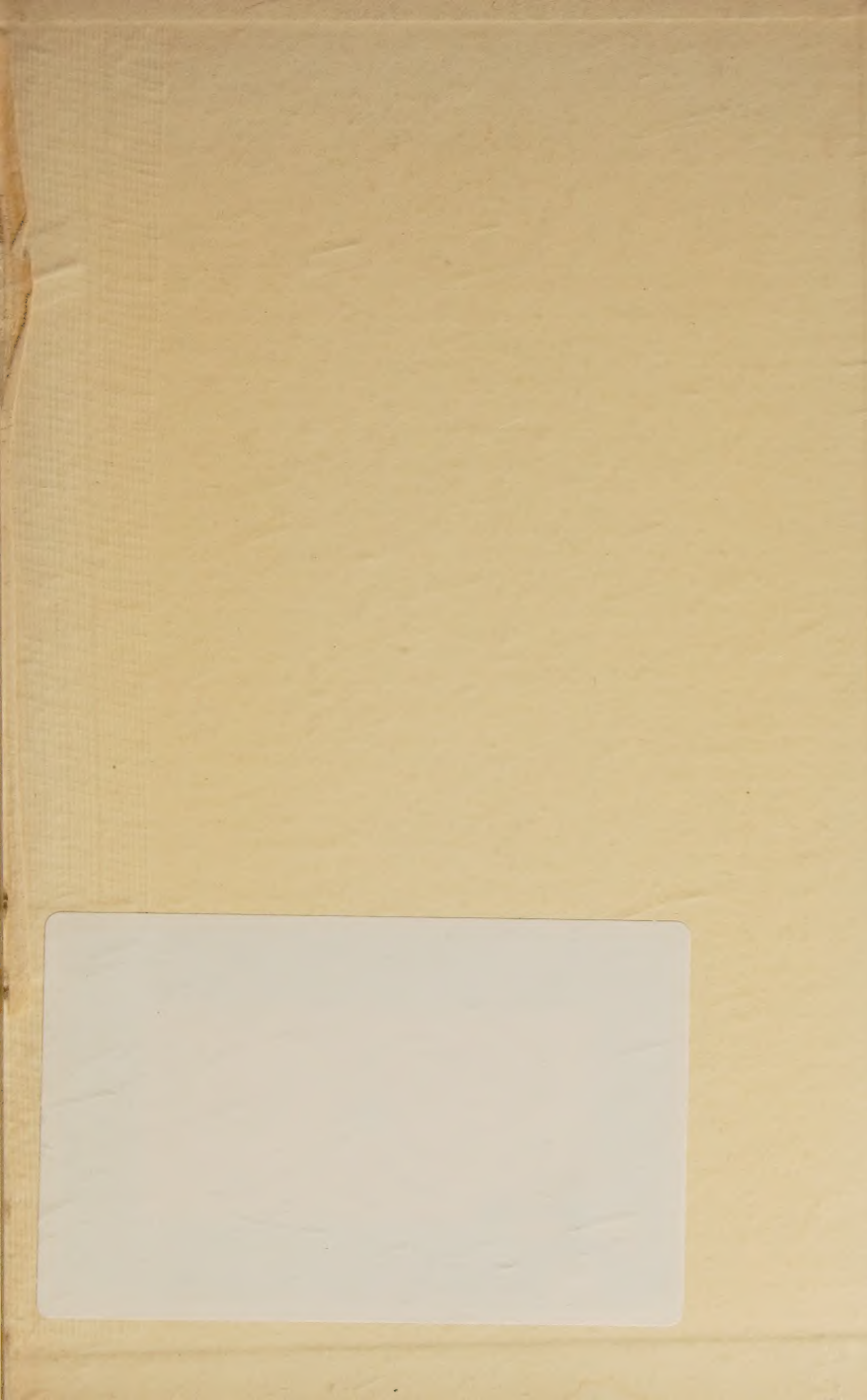
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